DHARMA

Studies in its Semantic, Cultural and Religious History



Edited by

PATRICK OLIVELLE

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Āpastamba, Gautama, Baudhāyana, and Vasiṣṭha

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PREFACE

Most generalizations about Indian culture and religion upon close scrutiny turn out to be inaccurate. An exception undoubtedly is the term *dharma*. This term and the notions underlying it clearly constitute the most central feature of Indian civilization down the centuries, irrespective of linguistic, sectarian, or regional differences. In a special way, the centrality of *dharma* to the understanding of Indian religions has been recognized by all scholars. One has only to pick up any introduction to Hinduism of Buddhism to note the prominence given to this term by the authors. Many note the broad semantic compass of the term, often commenting that the term is "untranslatable". One is also left with the impression that, following the orientalist image of the "unchanging" India, *dharma* has always been the central concept of Indian religion and culture, that this term has not been subject to evolution and change as its was appropriated, challenged, and sometimes even rejected by different groups and traditions.

Several years ago as I was working on an edition and translation of the *Dharmaśāstras* I began to inquire why a new genre of literature should emerge at a particular point in history devoted to the notion of *dharma*. The emergence of such new genres generally point to new social, economic, and religious circumstances. Invited to present a paper at a conference on "Asceticism and Power" at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in 2001, I began to investigate the use of *dharma* in the Vedic corpus. To my surprise I found that the term was used sparingly in the texts of the middle and late vedic period; it certainly was not the central term in the religious vocabulary of the Vedas.[1]

The idea of a volume dedicated to investigating the history of *dharma* was born from those early investigations. I want to thank Phyllis Ganoff for enthusiastically embracing this idea and for devoting a volume of the *Journal of Indian Philosophy* for this purpose.

The seventeen papers included in this collection deal with many significant historical manifestations of the term *dharma;* they do not deal with all. There are many areas that are untouched by these

contributions. Some have been the subject of other studies, such as the Pāli term *dhamma* studied by the Geigers.[2] Others, such as the medieval and modern appropriations of the term, especially within the language of religious nationalism (Hindutva) in India and in the vocabularies of contemporary Indian villages, remain to be studied. The selection of the topics covered in this volume was dictated, on the one hand, by the significant areas that demanded coverage and, on the other, by the availability of scholars who were willing and able to contribute.

Nevertheless, I hope that these studies by some of the leading scholars in the respective fields will both present a more nuanced picture of the semantic history of *dharma* by putting contours onto the flat landscape we have inherited and spur further studies of this concept so central for understanding the cultural history of the Indian subcontinent.

Finally, I want to thank Mr. N.P. Jain and Motilal Banarsidass for agreeing to publish this volume as a book so that it may be made available to a wider audience. In this book, two additional studies are included, John Taber's important article "The Significance of Kumārila's Philosophy" and Paul Hacker's "Dharma in Hinduism" because it deals with *dharma* within a broader perspective of its development with the Hindu tradition.

NOTES

[1] See my contribution to this volume for a more detailed study of this topic and my forthcoming article "Power of Words: The Ascetic Appropriation and the Semantic Evolution of dharma." In Peter Fluegel and Gustaaf Houtman, eds. Asceticism and Power in the Asian Context. London: Curzon.

[2] Geiger, M. & W. 1920 *Pāli Dhamma vornehmlich in der kanonischen Literatur.* Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil-philologische und historische Klasse, xxxi Band, 1. Abhandlung. Munich.

PATRICK OLIVELLE

THE SEMANTIC HISTORY OF DHARMA THE MIDDLE AND LATE VEDIC PERIODS

The studies of the term *dharma* in the early vedic period by Paul Horsch and Joel Brereton in this volume[1] have shown that the term is used with relative frequency in the *R̥g Veda* (67 times) with a somewhat broad semantic range including the cosmological, ritual, and ethical spheres. The frequency drops drastically in the other text from this period, the *Atharva Veda* (13 times), although maintaining a semantic range similar to the *R̥g Veda*. Given the centrality of *dharma* in later religious literature of India, both Brahmanical and Buddhist, one would expect that the term gradually began to assume a central role in the religious vocabulary of the middle and late vedic periods represented by the Brāhmaṇas, Āraṇyakas, the Upaniṣads, and the Śrauta- and Gr̥hya-sūtras, which together constitute a vast body of literature both in extent and in the variety of their topics and concerns.

A close study of the use of *dharma* in these texts, however, demonstrates the opposite: *dharma* was at best a marginal term and concept within the vocabulary of these texts, and it did not play a central role in the religious world depicted in them. On the one hand, the frequency of its usage drops rather dramatically and, on the other, its semantic range becomes narrower, being restricted for the most part to Varuṇa and his earthly counterpart, the king. In the concluding postscript I will attempt to show how this specialized meaning of *dharma* may have contributed to its further semantic development in its adoption and adaptation by Buddhism, by Aśoka, and in the later Brahmanical literature.

THE YAJURVEDA SAṂHITĀS

The Yajurveda Saṃhitās are the oldest texts we have after the *R̥g Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*. I have examined all four extant Saṃhitās: *Maitrāyaṇī, Kāṭhaka, Taittirīya,* and *Vājasaneyi*. The study of *dharma*[2] in these texts is complicated by two factors: first, they

often cite verses from the *Ṛg Veda*; and second, because they are parallel recensions of the same ritual material, they frequently present the same passages. To determine the frequency of *dharma* in the Yajurvedic vocabulary, therefore, I have discounted citations from the *Ṛg Veda* and counted only once the passages that are repeated almost verbatim in several of these Saṃhitās.

In the four Yajurveda Saṃhitās the term *dharma* is found in 22 passages.[3] Even this may be an overestimate because several of these occurrences are in stock phrases and epithets. Many of these refer to Varuṇa or Mitra-Varuṇa. Thus we have the recurrent phrase *dhruvéṇa dhármaṇā* ("with firm/enduring *dharma*") with reference to Mitra-Varuṇa: *dyutānás tvā mārutó minotu mitrā́váruṇayor dhruvéṇa dhármaṇā* – "May Dyutāna Māruta establish you in accordance with the enduring *dharma* of Mitra and Varuṇa" (at the planting of the sacrificial post; *TS*.1.3.1.2; *MS* 1.2.11; *VS* 5.27). The same phrase is repeated in a different context: *váruṇas tvā dhṛtávrato dhū́payatu mitrā́váruṇau dhruvéṇa dhármaṇā* – "May Varuṇa, whose commandment is upheld, perfume you with incense, may Mitra and Varuṇa, in accordance with their enduring *dharma*" (at the perfuming of the pan; *MS* 4.9.1).[4] And again: *mitrā́váruṇau tvottarataḥ pári dhattāṃ dhruvéṇa dhármaṇā* – "May Mitra and Varuṇa lay you around in the north in accordance with their enduring *dharma*" (at the laying of the enclosing sticks [*paridhi*]; *KS* 1.11; *TS* 1.1.11.2; *VS* 2.3; *ŚB* 1.3.4.4). The use of *dharman* here closely agrees with its principal usage in the *Ṛg Veda*; *dharman* is the institute or commandment of Varuṇa, an institute that is here said to be *dhruva*, firm and enduring. The *MS* (3.8.9) provides a commentary on the phrase:

mitrā́váruṇau dhruvéṇa dhármaṇéti / mitrám evaínāṃ dādhā́ra, váruṇaḥ kalpayati, vídhṛtyai ca khálu vā́ eṣā́ṃ prajā́nāṃ kḷptyai ca mīyate, mitrā́váruṇau vaí devā́nāṃ dhármadhā́rayau, daivám vā́ etád dhármam adīdharatāṃ /

"Mitra and Varuṇa in accordance with their enduring *dharma*. Mitra, indeed, holds it fast, and Varuṇa establishes it. For the upholding of these creatures and for their establishment, it is set up. Mitra and Varuṇa are clearly the ones who uphold *dharma* among the gods. They have upheld here the divine *dharma*".

Note that the explanation clearly connects *dharma* with its root *dhṛ*, to bear, to support, to uphold. The connection between *dhruva* and *dharma* is evident also in a passage of the *KS* (35.7): *dhruvā dyaur dhruvā pṛthivī dhruvaṃ viśvam idaṃ jagat / devā ha dharmaṇā dhruvā yajamānaḥ paśubhir dhruvaḥ* – "The sky is enduring; the earth is enduring; this whole world is enduring. The gods are enduring through *dharma*, and the sacrificer is enduring through the sacrificial animals".[5]

The close connection between *dharma* and Varuṇa within the Yajurveda Saṃhitās is most evident within the context of two rituals associated with kingship, the royal consecration (*rājasūya*) and the horse sacrifice (*aśvamedha*) performed by a king to enhance and proclaim his sovereignty.[6] At the royal consecration the king is placed in close relationship to both Varuṇa and *dharma*. Several cakes (*caru*) are offered to deities who are identified with various characteristics (*TS* 1.8.10.1): Agni is the lord of the house (*gṛhapati*), Soma is the lord of the forest (*vanaspati*), Rudra is the lord of cattle (*paśupati*), and Bṛhaspati is the lord of speech (*vācaspati*). The last two are Mitra, characterized as *satya*, and Varuṇa, who is *dharmapati*, the lord of *dharma*. In the parallel passage at *MS* 2.6.6 the wording is *mitrā́ya satyásya pátaye ... váruṇāya dhármasya pátaye* – "To Mitra the lord of truth; to Varuṇa the lord of *dharma*".[7] Within the same context we have a mantra asking Savitṛ and other gods to stimulate the new king (*savitā́ tvā ... suvatām*). Once gain the deities are given their distinctive characteristics (*TS* 1.8.10.2): *mítraḥ satyā́nāṃ váruṇo dhármapatīnām* (or in *MS dhármāṇām*).[8] After this the new king is presented with the words: *eṣa vo bharatā rājā* – "This, O Bharatas, is your king!" In the *MS* (2.6.8; 4.4.2), gods are invoked to make the new king an upholder of *dharma: sómā índro váruṇo mitró agnís té devā́ dharmadhṛ́to dhármaṃ dhārayantu* – "Soma, Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Agni – may these gods, the upholders of *dharma*, uphold *dharma*". The *TS* (1.8.16.2) addresses the king, identifying him with Varuṇa: *váruṇo 'si satyadhármā* – "You are Varuṇa, whose *dharma* is true/real."Here again we have the implicit statement that the epithet of Varuṇa as *satyadharmā* is applicable to the king as well. Within the Aśvamedha rite also the same epithet is used with reference to the reins of Mitra and Varuṇa's chariot: *yó vāṃ rátha ṛjúraśmiḥ sátyadharmā mithucárantam upayā́ti dūṣáyan* – "You, whose chariot with straight reins and true/real *dharma* draws near, frustrating him who acts falsely" (*MS* 3.16.5; *KS* 22.15; *TS* 4.7.15.2). In these and in other passages we will examine in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads, the kingly power or *kṣatra* is intimately connected with *dharma*. In the same way as Varuṇa, the heavenly sovereign, his earthly counterpart is also *dharmapati*; the two are lords and upholders of *dharma* in the cosmos and within society.

The connection of *dharma* to the royal and judicial sphere is nicely illustrated by one ritual detail. In the Puruṣamedha, the real or symbolic human sacrifice, different types of men are sacrificed to various deities. The kinds of men sacrificed to *dharma* and its opposite

adharma are instructive: to *dharma*, a *sabhāga* (presumably, a man who participates at the royal audience hall where judicial proceedings are carried out), and to *adharma*,[9] a deaf man (*badhira*), quite the opposite of the debater in the assembly hall (*VS* 30.6, 10; *TB* 3.4.1).

THE BRĀHMAṆAS

The corpus of the Brāhmaṇas is even more vast than the Yajurveda Saṃhitās. For this study I have chosen three: *Aitareya, Taittirīya,* and *Śatapatha.* Although paralleling the *Aitareya,* the *Kauṣītaki* does not use the term *dharma* at all.[10] In the three Brāhmaṇas that are the focus of this study, the term *dharma* occurs independently a total of 11 times.[11] This is striking, especially because the Brāhmaṇas, unlike the Saṃhitās, contain a wide spectrum of material and address numerous issues, including ritual and ethical ones, pertaining to Brahmanical life. One would assume, *a priori*, that if *dharma* was a key concept that defined the Brahmanical view of the world and of human life, it would have been used more frequently and within a variety of contexts.

The term is used only once in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, and, significantly, here also it occurs within the context of the royal consecration (*rājasūya*). At *AB* 8.12–14 there is a description of the great anointing (*mahābhiṣeka*) of Indra as king by the gods, which is immediately followed at *AB* 8.15–23 by the anointing of the king. Clearly, the anointing of Indra provides the model for the anointing of the king. In both we have the following public proclamation of the sovereignty of Indra and the king, the former proclaimed by the Viśvedevas and the latter by the "king-makers". (*rājakartāraḥ*). The wording is identical in the two contexts with the exception of the audience addressed, gods (*devāḥ*) in the case of Indra and men (*janāḥ*) in the case of the king:

imaṃ janā [devā] abhyutkrośata samrājaṃ sāmrājyaṃ bhojaṃ bhojapitaraṃ svarājaṃ svārājyaṃ virājaṃ vairājyaṃ parameṣṭhinaṃ pārameṣṭhyaṃ rājānaṃ rājapitaraṃ kṣatram ajani kṣatriyo 'jani viśvasya bhūtasyādhipatir ajani viśām attājany amitrāṇāṃ hantājani brāhmaṇānāṃ goptājani dharmasya goptājanīti. (*AB* 7.12, 17)

"Do ye proclaim him, O men [O gods], as overlord and overlordship, as paramount ruler and father of paramount rulers, as self ruler and self rule, as sovereign and sovereignty, as supreme lord and supreme lordship, as king and father of kings. The *kṣatra* (royal power) has been born, the *kṣatriya* has been born, the suzerain of all creation has been born, the eater of the commoners (*viś*) has been born, the slayer of foes has been born, the guardian of *brāhmaṇas* has been born, the guardian of *dharma* has been born." (Tr. Keith with modification)

The proclamation reaches its climax with the announcement that Indra/king has been born through the right of consecration as the guardian of *dharma*. Here Indra has replaced Varuṇa, but the connection of the king to *dharma* is brought to the forefront.

In the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa dharma* occurs four times. In three of these *dharma* is closely associated with Varuṇa and with the overlord (*adhipati*). At *TB* 3.9.16.2, which is a commentary on *TS* 7.4.16 dealing with the horse sacrifice, the mantra of the TS *namó 'dhipataye* ("Homage to the overlord") is interpreted by the *TB* as: *dhármo vā́ ádhipatiḥ, dhármam evā́varundhe* ("The overlord is *dharma*. He does, indeed, obtain *dharma*"). The person who is here identified with *ādhipatya* and with *dharma* is the king performing the horse sacrifice. In the *TS*, significantly, the mantra commented on by the *TB* comes at the end and climax of a longer mantra: "Homage to the king! Homage to Varuṇa! Homage to Prajāpati! Homage to the overlord!" Here *dharma* as the *adhipati* is placed last as the highest.

At *TB* 3.11.4.1 we have the common designation of Varuṇa as "Lord of *dharma*". Indeed the juxtaposition of *indrapatnī* and *dharmapatnī* ("wife of Indra" and "wife of *dharma*") at *TB* 3.11.1.20 makes it likely that *dharma* here stands for Varuṇa, whose epithet is *dharmapati*.

In the voluminous *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, if we exclude the last section consisting of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, the term *dharma* occurs in just six passages. In one of the most significant statements regarding the relation between *dharma*, Varuṇa, and the king, the *Śatapatha* (5.3.3.9), within the context of the royal consecration (*rājasūya*), states:

> *athá váruṇāya dhármapataye / vāruṇám yavamáyaṃ caruṃ nírvapati tád enaṃ váruṇa evá dhármapatir dhármasya pátiṃ karoti paramátā vaí sá yó dhármasya pátir ásad yó há paramátāṃ gácchati tíṃ hí dhárma upayánti tásmād váruṇāya dhármapataye //*
>
> "Then to Varuṇa the lord of *dharma* he offers a cake made with barley. Thereby Varuṇa himself, the lord of *dharma*, makes him [the king] the lord of *dharma*. That, surely, is the highest state when one becomes the lord of *dharma*. For when someone attains the highest state, (people) come to him (in matters relating) to *dharma*. Therefore, to Varuṇa, the lord of *dharma*".

Here we get a clearer picture as to what the author of the *Śatapatha* means by *dharma*, certainly clearer than the texts we have examined thus far. It has to do with matters regarding which people come to the king and must refer principally to legal disputes. *Dharma* is thus placed squarely within the public realm of law and social norms that must be overseen by the king. We can now understand why the king

is the *dharmapati*, in the same way as Varuṇa, the sovereign who oversees the cosmic *dharma*. Perhaps this was the meaning generally attached to *dharma* during the middle vedic period and underlies the statements on *dharma* in other texts that we have examined.

Another significant passage occurs within a creation story, a passage that throws further light on the meaning of *dharma* for the author of the *ŚB*. After Prajāpati was born, he created four gods: Agni, Indra, Soma, and Parameṣṭhin. These five deities then observe the four directions. Our passage deals with the north (*ŚB* 11.1.6.24):

áthódīcīṃ díśam apaśyan / tā́m ápo 'kurvatópainām itáḥ kurvīmahī́ti taṃ dhármam akurvata dhármo vá ā́pas tásmād yádemáṃ lokám ā́pa āgácchanti sárvam èvedáṃ yathādharmáṃ bhavaty átha yadā́vṛṣṭir bhávati bálīyān eva tarhy ábalīyasa ā́datte dhármo hy ā́paḥ //

"Then they saw the northern direction. They made it waters. 'Let us improve it from here,' they said. They made it *dharma*. The waters, surely, are *dharma*. Therefore, when waters come to this world, all this becomes in accordance with *dharma*. But when there is no rain, then the stronger indeed seizes the weaker ones, for the waters are *dharma*".

This passage further supports the meaning of *dharma* as social order founded on law. The argument here corresponds to the "law of the fish" (*matsyanyāya*) of later Dharmaśāstras. Here, however, there is no mention of a king or the lack of a king; it is the natural phenomena of abundance created by water and famine created by drought that bring about adherence to and deviation from *dharma*. The assurance of timely rain, however, is very much a function of kingship, and Varuṇa is closely associated with water. Indeed, as Insler has recently pointed out, the royal consecration (*rājasūya*) initially may have been an annual ritual conducted during the winter solstice to assure the timely progress of the seasons and the timely arrival of rain.[12]

At *ŚB* 13.4.3.14 it is Indra who is identified with *dharma*, but even here note the connection between *dharma* and Indra as king of the gods: *dhárma índro rā́jéty āha tásya devā́ víśah* – "Indra the king is *dharma*, he says; his people are the gods".

The *Śatapatha* also uses the negative *adharma* twice in the sense of something done contrary to law or the natural order of things. At *ŚB* 3.7.3.7 the author in refuting an opponent's view about how to bind the sacrificial animal. He says that doing it the opponent's way "would be as if he intended to do an *adharma* stealthily" (*yathā́dharmaṃ tiraścáthā cíkīrṣet*). Likewise at *ŚB* 5.2.4.13 with reference to the Dakṣiṇā cow that draws a cart (*anaḍuhī*), it says: *yát*

strī satī váhati ádharmeṇa tád asyai vāruṇám rūpám – "In that, while she is a female she draws contrary to *dharma*, that is her Vāruṇa form".[13] In both these instances, *adharma* appears to indicate an activity that is either against the rule, whether it is ritual or natural.

An unexpected and possibly a new connotation of *dharma* as either a specific attribute or a right/obligation is found at *ŚB* 11.5.7.1, a passage in praise of *svādhyāya*, vedic study, through which a man becomes independent and wealthy, and by which his intelligence grows (*prajñāvṛddhi*). Such a Brahmin is said to acquire four *dharmas* and people serve him with four other *dharmas*:

prájñā várdhamānā catúro dhármān brāhmaṇám abhiníṣpādayati brā́hmaṇyam pratirūpacaryā́m yáśo lokapaktím, lokáḥ pácyamānaś catúrbhir dhármair brāhmaṇám bhunakty arcáyā ca dā́nena cājyeyátayā cāvadhyátayā ca /

"The growing intelligence brings to the Brahmin four *dharmas*: Brahmanical stature, fitting deportment, fame, and 'cooking' the world.[14] The world, as it is being 'cooked', gratifies the Brahmin with four *dharmas* – with veneration, with gifts, with the condition of not being oppressed and of not being subject to capital punishment.

There appears to be a semantic development here from "law" or "the way things are or should be" to specific attributes that characterizes a particular entity.[15] The four *dharmas* of the world vis-à-vis the Brahmin, indeed, can be seen as legal privileges granted by society to the Brahmin class.

Except for this last passage, the Brāhmaṇas do not expand the semantic range of *dharma* in a significant way. It remains closely associated with Varuṇa and with the royal power of the king. We detect, however, more clearly that *dharma* has acquired the primary meaning of law and order within society, a law that is hypostatized into an abstract entity as *dharma* that stands above and gives legitimacy to *kṣatra*, the ruling power of the king.

THE ĀRAṆYAKAS

The term *dharma* occurs only three times in the Āraṇyakas, twice in the *Taittirīya* and once in the *Aitareya*. They do not add much to the semantics of *dharma*.

At *AĀ* 2.1.7, within a section that describes the creation of the world through the organs of the Puruṣa, we have a statement that again connects *dharma* with Varuṇa and with water: *varuṇo 'sya prajām dharmeṇa dādhāra* – "Varuṇa supported his offspring through *dharma*".

The *Taittirīya* passages are brief. At *TĀ* 2.19.1 various cosmic entities or categories are homologized with various parts of a Śiśumāra (alligator or porpoise). Here *dharma* is said to be the crown of its head (*mūrdhānam*). At *TĀ* 4.42.5 we have a list of divine categories that begins with *śrī* and end with *dharma*. The incorporation of *dharma* into lists of cosmic categories becomes a common feature in late vedic texts, and in these lists *dharma* is most often placed last as the highest of the categories.

THE UPANIṢADS

The Upaniṣads are the texts where we would expect to find a sustained treatment of *dharma*, given that a central theme in these documents is human activity and knowledge leading to an ultimate state beyond death. That, however, is not the case. In the four early prose Upaniṣads[16] – *Bṛhadāraṇyaka, Chāndogya, Taittirīya*, and *Aitareya* (in which the term does not occurs at all) – the term occurs in just nine passages. Even more importantly, there is no sustained focus on the term as it applies to living a righteous life, except perhaps in *ChU* 2.23.1 and *TU* 1.11.1.

The Bṛhadāraṇyaka

In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*, which constitutes the last portion of the ŚB, the term occurs in four passages. Significantly, it occurs only once in the central Yājñavalkya-kāṇḍa (*BU* 3–4), which forms the oldest core of the Upaniṣad. At 4.4.5, in a passage demonstrating that the *ātman* is made up of everything, there is a long list of categories. In this list, *ātman* is said to be made up of various categories and their opposites: *tejomayo 'tejomayaḥ kāmamayo 'kāmamayaḥ krodhayamo 'krodhamayaḥ dharmamayo 'dharmamayaḥ sarvamayaḥ* – "made of light and the lightless, made of desire and the desireless, made of anger and the angerless, made of *dharma* and *adharma*, made of everything". We are not told what *dharma* means here, except that it must have been viewed as occupying the highest position within the list, because after it the author simply says *sarvamayaḥ*.

The most sustained treatment of *dharma* is found in *BU* 1.4.14 within the context of a creation myth. In the beginning this world was only *brahman*. Because it was single, the author says, it "did not become fully developed" (*na vyabhavat*). *Brahman* then goes about creating "the ruling power" (*kṣatra*), including the gods, then the

Vaiśya class, and finally the Śūdra class. After each creation, the author repeats the refrain *na vyabhavat*, "it still did not become fully developed." As the final act of creation that made *brahman* fully develop and reach its full potential, it created *dharma*:

tacchreyo rūpam atyasrjata dharmam / tad etat kṣatrasya kṣatraṃ yad dharmaḥ/ tasmād dharmāt paraṃ nāsti / atho abalīyān balīyāṃsam āśaṃsate dharmeṇa / yathā rājñaivam / yo vai sa dharmaḥ satyaṃ vai tat / tasmāt satyam vadantam āhur dharmaṃ vadatīti / dharmaṃ vā vadantaṃ satyaṃ vadatīti / etad dhy evaitad ubhayaṃ bhavati /
"So it created *dharma*, a form superior to and surpassing itself. And *dharma* is here the ruling power standing above the ruling power. Hence there is nothing higher than *dharma*. Therefore, a weaker man makes demands of a stronger man by appealing to *dharma*, just as one does by appealing to a king. Now, *dharma* is nothing but the truth. Therefore, when a man speaks the truth, people say that he speaks *dharma*; and when a man speaks *dharma*, people say that he speaks the truth. They are really the same thing."

This passage echoes two other significant passages of the *ŚB* that we have examined: 5.3.3.9, which presents *dharma* as the highest, something to which people go to settle disputes, and 11.1.6.24, which speaks of the stronger seizing the weak when there is the absence of *dharma*. In the *BU* passage, however, *dharma* is made the very essence of *kṣatra*, the ruling power. A weaker man can take on even a stronger opponent by resorting to *dharma* in exactly the same way as he can by resorting to the king. I think the subtext here is litigation. A weaker man can drag a stronger man to the king's court. As in many other vedic texts, *dharma* here is not only placed side by side with *satya*, truth, but is said to be identical with it.[17] The significant point in this passage for our study is that, as in the Brāhmaṇas, here also *dharma* is associated with the legal and regal spheres.

The other occurrence of *dharma* in the first chapter (*BU* 1.5.23) is in a *śloka* cited in support of the pre-eminence of breath over other faculties:

yataś codeti sūryaḥ astaṃ yatra ca gacchati /
taṃ devāś cakrire dharmaṃ sa evādya sa u śva //
"From which the sun rises, and into which it sets; the gods make it *dharma*. It is the same today and tomorrow."

The author of the *BU* comments after the first half-verse: *prāṇād vā eṣa udeti prāṇe 'staṃ eti* – "From breath, indeed, does it rise, and into breath it sets". The meaning of *dharma* here is unclear and the commentarial section of the text does not deal with this term. It appears likely that for the author of the *BU dharma* was the highest principle, and he equates it with breath/wind, which is here presented

as the highest faculty, breath with respect to *adhyātma* and wind with respect to *adhidaivata*. In the original setting of this verse, however, *dharma* may have been viewed as the ultimate institute/statue/commandment that is responsible for the regular rising and setting of the sun, a meaning familiar from the *Ṛg Veda.*

Finally, in the Madhukāṇḍa (*BU* 2.5.11) where all cosmic categories are said to be honey, *dharma* occurs just before *satya.* The connection between these two terms is the only thing remarkable about this occurrence; nothing is said that would permit us to understand what *dharma* meant for the author.

The Chāndogya

The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, in which the term occurs in three passages, does not have a single extended discussion of *dharma.* The first time the term occurs is at 2.1.4. The context is the veneration of *sāman* as *sādhu* (good). The section concludes: *sa ya etad evaṃ vidvān sādhu sāmety upāste 'bhyāśo ha yad enaṃ sādhavo dharmā ā ca gaccheyur upa ca nameyur* – "When someone knows this and venerates the Sāman chant as good, he can certainly expect that good *dharmas* will come his way and fall to his share". The meaning of *dharma* in this context is quite unclear, but it may have the meaning of qualities, attributes, or simply things, somewhat similar to its usage we examined in *ŚB* 11.5.7.1.

In an eulogy of speech (*vāc*) at 7.2.1 we have another occurrence of *dharma* in a long list of things that speech makes known from the *Ṛg Veda* down to worms, moths, and ants: *dharmaṃ cādharmaṃ ca satyaṃ cānṛtaṃ ca sādhu cāsādhu ca* – "*dharma* and *adharma*, truth and untruth, good and non-good." Here *dharma* is juxtaposed with *satya* and *sādhu.* The first pair we have seen elsewhere; and I think that for the author of the *ChU satya* and *sādhu* may be concepts that are closely related. Here again we get the negative *adharma.*

The final and the most significant occurrence of *dharma* in the *Chāndogya* is in the famous passage on *dharmaskandhas* (2.23.1):[18]

trayo dharmaskandhāḥ / yajño 'dhyayanaṃ dānam iti prathamaḥ / tapa eva dvitīyaḥ / brahmacāry ācāryakulavāsī tṛtīyaḥ /
"There are three types of persons whose torso is *dharma.*[19] The first is the one who pursues sacrifice, vedic recitation, and gift-giving. The second is the one who is devoted to austerity. Third is a celibate student of the Veda living at his teacher's house."

It is clear that in this passage *dharma* specifically refers to modes of religious life, probably to the life of a Brahmanical householder, an

ascetic, and a vedic student. Here for the first time in vedic literature we have an unambiguous passage that uses *dharma* in a way very close to its usage in the later Dharmaśāstras.

The Taittirīya

In the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad dharma* occurs in a passage at the end of the first chapter (*śikṣāvallī*), a passage that appears very much like a remnant of an old Gṛhyasūtra dealing with the instruction of a vedic student and his return home after his residence at his teacher's house. In his parting words to the student (*TU* 1.11.1), the teacher tells him: *satyaṃ vada / dharmaṃ cara* ("Speak the truth. Practice *dharma*"). This is the first time in the vedic literature that the verb √*car* is used with reference to *dharma*, indicating that here the term is used in its classical Dharmaśāstric meaning. Note, however, that *satya* is closely associated with *dharma*.

In the same passage (*TU* 1.11.4) authoritative Brahmins, whose behavior is presented as a model to the young student, are characterized as *dharmakāmaḥ* (devoted to or loving *dharma*).

THE ŚRAUTASŪTRAS

The dates of the numerous *Śrautasūtras* are uncertain, but at least some of them are probably from a pre-Buddhist period and overlap with some of the later vedic texts. Although they are not viewed as part of the vedic canon, they continue the tradition of the Brāhmaṇas in providing rules and explanations of the vedic rituals.

In the 10 Śrautasūtras I have examined, the term *dharma* occurs in 39 passages.[20] In all but a handful of them, however, *dharma* does not have the meaning found in either the earlier vedic texts or the later Dharmaśāstras. It appears that the expert scholastic tradition focusing on the ritual developed a very special meaning of *dharma* that was restricted to this tradition. Within this specialized meaning, *dharma* refers to the specific ritual rules or ritual details of a rite. Many of these passages deal with how *dharmas*, taken as ritual details, are extended from ritual archetypes, such as the Darśapūrṇamāsa (New- and Full-moon) sacrifice to others that are modeled after it. Thus, for example, the *BhārŚr* (1.1.9) states the general principle: *tatraiṣo 'tyantapradeśo ye kecana paurṇamāsīm amāvāsyāṃ vā dharmā anārabhyāmnāyanta ubhayatraiva te kriyante* – "In this connection, this is the general rule. The characteristics

(*dharmāḥ*) which have been prescribed in connection with the full-moon day or the new-moon day without specification hold good with reference to both" (Tr. Kashikar). In a more specific case, the *BhārŚr* (6.15.5) states: *sarveṣv iṣṭipaśubandheṣu dārśapaurṇamāsikā dharmā anuyanti* – "The *dharmas* of the New-moon and the Full-moon sacrifices are carried over into the *iṣṭi* and animal sacrifices."

It is significant that this meaning of *dharma* is absent in the vocabulary of the vedic texts, including the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads. This specialized and technical meaning probably developed within the expert tradition devoted to ritual that produced both the Śrautasūtras and the later Mīmāṃsā texts.

The compound *svadharma*, interestingly, is also used with a similar meaning; here it refers to the fact that a particular rite has its own ritual details (*dharmas*) specific and limited to it and not taken over from or extended to other rites.[21] This meaning is quite similar to the use of *dharma* we saw at *ŚB* 11.5.7.1 and *ChU* 2.1.4.

The only passage where the term appears to have a Dharmaśāstric meaning is *BharŚr* 9.18.4, where the question is how to tell whether an oblation is defiled: *kathaṃ duṣṭaṃ havir vidyāt / yad āryāṇāṃ dharmajñānāṃ dharmakāmānāṃ abhojanīyaṃ na tena devān yajeta* ("How does one know a defiled oblation? What Āryas who know *dharma* and who love *dharma* consider unfit to be eaten, with that he should not make an offering to the gods"). As in the *TU*, here also we have the term *dharmakāma* with the additional phrase *dharmajña*, compounds that become commonplace in the Dharmaśāstras.

Apart from the specialized meaning of *dharma* as ritual details or characteristics[22] that may be transferred between rites, the term does not play a central role in these ritual texts.

THE GṚHYASŪTRAS

Even though many of the Gṛhyasūtras date from a period after the rise of Buddhism, some of them may be earlier. It is in these texts devoted to the life and rituals of a Brahmin householder, however, that we would expect the term *dharma* to play a central role, as it does, for example, in the parallel texts of the Dharmasūtras. That, however, is not the case. In the Gṛhyasūtras that can claim some antiquity[23] the term occurs only six times, and two of these (*ŚāṅGṛ* 3.3.7; *PārGṛ* 3.4.18) deal with a ritual connected with the building of a house. There we have a mantra that identifies *dharma* with the main post of the house: *dharma sthūnarājaḥ*.

In another ritual context, this time the offering of the Vaiśvadeva oblation, the *Kāṭaka Gṛhyasūtra* (54.6) enjoins an offering to *dharma* and *adharma* at the door: *dharmādharmayor dvāre*. Here too positive and the negative forms are taken as deities or cosmic principles, just as in the Upaniṣads.

Only in three passages do we have a usage similar to that found in the Dharmaśāstras. At *ŚāṅGṛ* 2.16.2 we have the refrain *iti dharmo vidhīyate* in a verse that closely resembles *MDh* 3.110. The six ślokas in this *khaṇḍa* appear to be taken from a Dharma text. In the *BauGṛ* (3.3.31) we have the term *dhārmika* with a very classical meaning used in the instruction to the student who has completed his studentship: *vratasamāptau vedasamāptau vā gurudakṣiṇām āhared dhārmiko yathāśakti* – "At the end of the observances or at the end of (the study of) the Veda, the *dhārmika* (student) should bring a gift to the teacher according to his ability." And, finally, in *ĀśGṛ* (1.7.1) we have a passage very reminiscent of Dharmaśāstras: *atha khalūccāvacā janapadadharmā grāmadharmāś ca tān vivāhe pratīyāt* – "Now, manifold are the *dharmas* of regions and the *dharmas* of villages. One should observe these at a marriage." Here *dharma* clearly refers to customs and local norms, a meaning that is identical to the Dharmaśāstric concept of *dharma*.

CONCLUDING POSTSCRIPT

This somewhat brief though comprehensive survey of the use of *dharma* in texts roughly belonging to the middle and late vedic period (around 800–400 BCE, although some of the individual texts and passages may be from a later period), shows that in the early texts of this period, especially the Brāhmaṇas and the early Upaniṣads, the term is used most frequently with reference to Varuṇa and the king. It is likely that *dharma* was part of the specialized vocabulary associated with royalty, especially because of its frequent use within the royal consecration (*rājasūya*). In all likelihood, *dharma* referred to social order and the laws of society that the king was obligated to enforce. *Dharma* thus becomes an abstract concept and entity, a cosmic force that stands above the king; it is called *kṣatrasya kṣatram*, the power behind the royal power.[24] This hypostatization of *dharma* is carried on in other texts, when *dharma* and *adharma* are considered deities or cosmic categories.

There is no doubt that the classical meaning of *dharma* is encountered in a few passages of the Upaniṣads, Śrautasūtras, and

Gṛhyasūtras. But the rarity of these passages makes one suspect that they reflect the ideology of a later period when *dharma* had come to define the very essence of the Brahmanical way of life.

The question, then, is how did this term become transformed from a somewhat marginal and specialized context of the middle vedic texts to becoming the central concept within Brahmanical religious vocabulary, generating an entire genre of expert treatises, the Dharmaśāstras? How did the meaning of *dharma* change from its earlier limited applications to defining the proper religious life both in Brahmanism and in Buddhism?

Now, it is entirely possible that the evolution was gradual and internal to the Brahmanical tradition. Within this scenario, it was the Buddhists who borrowed the fully developed concept from the Brahmanical sources. There are several reasons why this is unlikely, the most significant of which is the fact that in texts that can be dated with some confidence to a pre-Buddhist period *dharma* does not occupy a central role within the religious vocabulary; the term does not appear still to have acquired the meaning that would enable theologians to define the good religious life as *dharma*.

I will here only summarize the conclusions I have drawn in an earlier paper on the subject (Olivelle, forthcoming). My hypothesis is that the Buddha[25] borrowed *dharma* as he did many other royal symbols to locate and articulate his new religion. Buddha's own ascribed pedigree makes him an heir to the throne. Prognosticators predicted that he will be a world-conquering (*cakravartin*) king or an enlightened being. Both the Buddha and other founders of new religions during this period are called *jina*, the conqueror. The Buddha's doctrine is compared to a wheel, a metonym for the war chariot and conquest; and his first sermon is the *dharmacakrapravartanasūtra*, "the Sūtra that set the wheel of *dharma* rolling". The Buddha's teaching is *śāsana*, the counterpart of a royal edit. These are all clearly royal symbols used, deliberately I think, to define a new ascetic group and a new religious ideology. Within this context, I think, we can see how *dharma*, which was called *kṣatrasya kṣatram*, the divine principle that gave legitimacy and meaning to a worldly ruler, the term associated with the divine sovereign Varuṇa, would be a natural choice to define the new dispensation, the new truth (*satya*) that the enlightened one had discovered. If this hypothesis is correct, then it was within early Buddhism that *dharma* changed from being a peripheral concept to becoming a central and key theological concept defining the Buddhist religion. Within this transformation, there must

have been a semantic development; *dharma* becomes increasingly ethicized within the primarily ethical religion of Buddhism. It came to define the good and righteous life and the truth (*satya*) the Buddha discovered which made such a life possible.

Another factor probably influenced the term's ascendancy in the religious vocabulary of India. The use of *dharma* within a single new religion could be ignored. It's use as the central concept in defining a new imperial ideology, the ethical ideology of the Maurya empire articulated by Aśoka in his edicts, could not be ignored even by the scholastic Brahmins working within the vedic *śākhās*. In his brief edits, Aśoka uses the term about 111 times (excluding the repetitions found in the multiple versions of the same edit).[26] This number stands in sharp contrast to the numbers we have examined in the much more vast literature of the middle and late vedic periods. It is very likely that Aśoka's use of *dharma* is mediated by its use within Buddhism. Aśoka not only gives pride of place to *dharma*, he also defines it in completely ethical terms. In Rock Edict 3, for example, he instructs his ministers to teach the *dharma* in the following words: "Obedience to mother and father is good (*sādhu*). Giving (*dāna*) to friends, acquaintances, and relatives, and to Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas is good. Not killing is good. Spending little and possessing little is good."[27] He uses *dharma* most frequently as the first member of compounds; for him everything is *dharmic:* so he calls his edits *dharmalipi*, and his pilgrimage *dharmayātrā*. I have counted 31 such compounds used by Aśoka.[28]

How did all this affect the Brahmanical community? Clearly the Aśokan reforms displaced the Brahmin's "special relationship" with the royal power; now there are two equal religious groups worthy of honor and vying for influence and patronage: *śramaṇa-brāhmaṇa*, in the compound used and possibly coined by Aśoka. The influence of the historical memory of this period is possibly reflected in Brahmanical literature of the following centuries.[29]

The term and the concept *dharma* acquired a prominence and centrality through both Buddhism and the Aśokan imperial theology that was impossible to ignore. My hypothesis is that the emergence of the Dharmaśāstric literature, first in the form of prose *sūtras* and then in metrical treatises beginning with Manu, was a direct consequence of Buddhist and Aśokan reforms. That a *śāstra*, an expert tradition of knowledge, be devoted to *dharma* would seem improbable from its marginal use within the theologies expressed in the middle and late vedic texts. Further, as Wezler and Lariviere in their

studies in this volume have demonstrated, there is a deep divide between what Wezler calls "vedic *dharma*" and "Dharmaśāstric *dharma*". The latter is based squarely on "custom", the traditional customs, usages, and practices viewed as authoritative within the Brahmanical communities. Historically, I think, this happened because the Brahmanical experts reflecting on this new *dharma* that defined one's religious, ethical, and social life had to find sources that would provide access to such a *dharma*; in other words, they had to find a *pramāṇa*, an authoritative means of knowing *dharma*.

The Buddhists had already formulated just such a *pramāṇa*, and that was the "words of the Buddha" (*buddhavacana*). Only the *ipsissima verba* of the Enlightened One could give us access to the truth, to *dharma*. The Brahmanical tradition already had such an infallible *pramāṇa*, the Veda. It was natural, therefore, for the expert tradition of Dharmaśāstra to proclaim that the Veda is the *pramāṇa* or the *mūla* (root) of *dharma*. This, however, was abstract theory and theology; it was Mīmāṃsā. In reality, however, the Veda has little to say about *dharma* in its new and expanded meaning. The "real" source of *dharma*, as Wezler and Lariviere have pointed out, was custom: the *smṛti* (memory) and *ācāra* (practice) of cultured, learned, and virtuous Brahmins, who came to be designated as *śiṣṭa*.

This brings up the issue of the dates of the earliest *śāstras* on *dharma*, the Dharmasūtras. The earliest reference to such texts is in Kātyāyana's *Vārttika* 39 on Pāṇini 1.2.38, which uses the term *dharmaśāstra*. Patañjali refers to "authors of Dharmasūtras" (*dharmasūtrakārāḥ*) in the plural twice in his *Mahābhāṣya* on Pāṇini 1.1.47 (p. 115), and 5.1.119 (p. 365). This would correspond to my estimate that the earliest Dharmasūtras do not date earlier than the 3rd century BCE.

If this historical reconstruction is accepted, then we will have another tool to date early Indian texts: those that reflected a developed meaning of *dharma* and give it a central role in their theology and vocabulary must be assigned to a date at least after the development of Buddhist doctrine, if not after the proclamation of Aśokan imperial ideology. We have already seen some such passages in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* and the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, as well as some of the *Gṛhyasūtras*. The dates of these texts, or at least the time when these passages were incorporated into them, may have to be rethought.

The same may be said for the grammarians Yāska and Pāṇini, who also use *dharma* in ways that indicate a highly developed and expanded concept. In Yāska's *Nirukta*, for example, we have the use of

the verb √*car* with reference to *dharma* in the story of Devapī and Śantanu: *adharmas tvayā caritaḥ* – "You have done an *adharma*" (2.10).[30] Then there is a verse that looks very much like a Dharmaśāstric verse asserting the right of daughters to inherit property (3.4): *aviśeṣeṇa putrāṇāṃ dāyo bhavati dharmataḥ / mithunānāṃ visargādau manuḥ svāyaṃbhuvo 'bravīt //* – "In accordance with *dharma* the partition of inheritance is done among male and female children no differently from the sons".[31] Given that Yāska has been subject to later redactoral activities, it is unclear whether these these usages are original. Pāṇini also, who is generally assigned to around 400 BCE, in several *sūtras* gives derivatives of *dharma* that show the word to have a classical meaning. Thus in *sūtra* 4.4.41 he indicates the derivative *dhārmika* in the sense of *dharmaṃ carati*. In *sūtra* 4.4.91, he shows that the affix *yat* comes after *dharma* (i.e. *dharmya*) in the sense of *dharmeṇa prāpyam* (obtainable by *dharma*) and in the very next *sūtra* shows that the same affix can be used with *dharma* to mean *dharmād anapetam* (not deviating from *dharma*).[32] These terms and usages must have been derived from or at least mediated by the spoken Sanskrit of the time (*bhāṣā*) rather than directly from the vedic vocabulary. If with von Hinüber and Falk[33] we date Pāṇini 350–300 BCE, his use of *dharma* would be quite explicable within the hypothesis I have presented.

The period we have examined was probably a watershed in the semantic development of *dharma*. Once the term became the central concept defining a civilization, this development accelerated. Other studies in this volume discuss aspects of its semantic range. It is, however, important to recognize that words do not exist in a vacuum; they are used by individuals and groups that have their own histories and interests and that change the meanings of words as they use them. Philology must not simply look at the web but at the spider also. The analysis of words thus can give significant and unique insights not just into human language but into human history. Given its centrality in Indian discourse, a close study of *dharma* has the potential to reveal interesting and hitherto unknown contours of ancient Indian history.

NOTES

1 See also Willman-Grabowska (1934).
2 In this study of the middle vedic texts, I have discounted the difference between the old neuter form *dharman* and the newer thematic stem *dharma*. In texts of

this period there does not appear to be any semantic difference between the two forms.

[3] MS 1.1.8; 1, 2, 11; 1.5.4, 11; 1.11.1; 2.6.6, 8; 2.8.8; 3.16.5 (75, 77); 4.12.6; KS 1.11; 8.7; 35.7; TS 1.8.14.1; 1.8.16.2; 3.2.8.1; VS 10.29; 20.9, 17; 30.6; 38.19.

[4] Other texts with parallel passages omit *dhruveṇa dharmaṇā*: TS 4.1.6.1; KS 16.5; VS 11.60; ŚB 6.5.3.10. I have adopted the translation from Brereton (1981: 55), as also his translation of *dhruveṇa dharmaṇā* in other places.

[5] The first half-verse is ṚV 10.173.4. The second half-verse is not found elsewhere.

[6] For an examination of kingship, see Rau 1957, 90–95.

[7] See also KS 15.6–7; VS 10.4, 6–9, 16, 18; TB 1.7.6; ŚB 5.3.4.27; 5.3.5.16–37; 5.4.1.15.

[8] On these passages where *dharma* is connected to the king, see Rau 1957: 90–96.

[9] This is the earliest occurrence of the negative *adharma* in the vedic literature.

[10] According to Vishva Bandhu's *Vedic Word-Concordance* (Hoshiarpur, 1973), *dharma* occurs in 11 passages of the *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa* and once in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*.

[11] Here also I have eliminated citations from the Saṃhitās, which are for the most part mantras for ritual recitations.

[12] Stanly Insler's paper "The Function of the Varuṇa Hymns of the Ṛg veda" at the Third International Vedic Workshop, Leiden, May 29–June 2, 2002. See the story of Devāpi and Śantanu in the *Bṛhaddevatā* (8.2): when a transgression against *dharma* occurred (here the younger brother becoming king in place of the older) the realm got no rain for 12 years.

[13] It is unclear why acting in an *adharmic* way makes her connected with Varuṇa; one would have expected the opposite. However, even here we have the correlation between Varuṇa and *dharma*.

[14] Eggeling, following Sāyaṇa, takes this expression to mean "perfecting of the people".

[15] We can see how such an extension may have influenced also the ritual meaning of *dharma* as a peculiarity or ritual detail of a particular rite and especially the later Buddhist Abhidharma meaning of *dharma* as particles of the ultimately real, that which makes something that thing (*svabhāva*), which parallels the ritual use of *svadharma* in the Śrautasūtras that we will examine below.

[16] I am not including the later Upaniṣad in this study because they are probably later than the rise of Buddhism and the early Dharmasūtras. The term is found in *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad* 2.1–2; *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 1.21; 2.13, 14; 4.14; *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.6.

[17] See the earlier connection of Mitra with *satya* and Varuṇa with *dharma*. The connection between *dharma* and *satya* continues into the classical period: see MDh 1.81. Their connection is also apparent within the context of judicial proceedings, especially in the context of witnesses who speak the truth: see MDh 8.14, 74, 80–8.

[18] For a detailed study of this passage, see Olivelle (1996).

[19] As I have explained in my previous study (Olivelle, 1996), I take the compound *dharmaskandhāḥ* as a Bahuvrīhi. Traditionally, it has been taken as a Tatpuruṣa and translated "divisions of *dharma*".

[20] These exclude the occurrence of the term in citations of mantras from the Saṃhitās. Āpastamba, 19.21.4, 16; 21.3.3, 10; Āśvalāyana, 10.5.15; 10.7.9; Baudhāyana, 24.37; 27.24; Bhāradvāja, 1.1.9; 6.15.5, 7, 12; 7.6.7; 9.18.3; Hiraṇyakeśin, 3.8.24, 32, 40, 41, 44, 46, 47; 13.4.27; 16.1.23; 22.4.2, 6; Kātyāyana, 1.8.7; 4.3.19; 5.8.17; 9.5.10; Lāṭyāyana, 7.7.19; Śāṅkhāyana, 4.5.13; 7.15.16–7; 9.26.2; 16.18.5; Vādhūla, 11.6.7–8, 24; and Vārāha 1.1.1.68. 70; 1.2.4.9.

[21] See ĀpŚr 19.21.16; HirŚr 3.8.40; 22.4.6; BārŚr 6.15.12.

22 This meaning did not disappear after the Śrautasūtras. We find it used with precisely the same meaning in the *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā Sūtra* 2.1.9–10.
23 I have omitted the *Vaikhānasa* and the *Āgniveśaya*, which clearly belong to a much later date.
24 On the use of such expressions, also found in *satyasya satyam*, see H. Oertel, *Zum altindischen Ausdrucksverstärkungstypus* satyasya satyam *"das Wahre des Wahren"* = *"die Quintessenz des Wahren."* Sitzungsberichte der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Abteilung, Jahrgang 1937, Heft 3. Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1937.
25 I use "Buddha" as a shorthand for the early Buddhists. What the historical Buddha actually taught is impossible to determine, because we have only one lens to view it and that is the Buddhist texts written, revised, edited over centuries.
26 Number of occurrences are given within parentheses: Rock edicts I (2); III (1); IV (10); V (10); VI (1); VIII (3); IX (5); X (2); XI (5); XII (2); XIII (11); XIV (1); XV (2); Pillar edicts I (8); II (3); IV (3); VI (3); VII (30); Minor rock edict I (4 only in Gujarra version); II (1); III (3); IV (1). The last is in the trilingual edict with Aramaic and Greek translations. The Aramaic equivalent of *dharma* given by Aśoka is "qsyt" and the Greek is "eusebia". John Huehnergard (personal communication) takes the root qst means "(be) true, truth". The form qsyt is a substantivized adjective, "what is true". This term thus corresponds to *satya* with which, as we have seen, *dharma* is often paired and sometimes identified. The Greek term may mean something like piety and reverence towards gods. According to Paul Woodruff (personal communication) there may be a connection between eusebia and kingship. Augustus is Latin for Sebastos, which is used in connection with Hellenistic kingship. In classical usage, *sebein* is used for respecting monarchs and *eusebein* for relations with the gods. As the line between kings and gods was blurred in the Hellenistic era, so was this rather soft distinction. A tantalizing possibility is that Aśoka's use of *dharma* may, in fact, have been influenced by Hellenistic or Persian royal vocabularies.
27 According to the Girnar version: *sādhu mātari ca pitari ca susrūsā mitrasaṃstutañātīnaṃ bāmhaṇasamaṇānāṃ sādhu dānaṃ prāṇānaṃ sādhu anāraṃbho appavyayatā appabhāṃḍatā sādhu.*
28 Here is the list of these compounds: *dhammakāmatā, dhaṃmaguṇa, dhaṃmaghoṣa, dhaṃmacaraṇa (calana), dhaṃmatthaṃba, dhaṃmadāna, dhammādhithāna, dhaṃmaniyama, dhaṃmānugaha, dhaṃmānupaṭīpatti, dhaṃmānusathi, dhaṃmānusāsanā, dhaṃmanisita, dhaṃmāpadāna, dhaṃmapalipuccha, dhaṃmapaliyāyāni, dhaṃmāpekkhā, dhaṃmamaṅgala, dhaṃmamahāmātā, dhammayātā, dhaṃmayuta, dhaṃmalipi, dhaṃmavāya / sīlana, dhaṃmavijaya, dhaṃmaviḍḍhi, dhaṃmavuta, dhaṃmasaṃbaṃdha, daṃmasaṃvibhāga, dhaṃmasaṃstava, dhaṃmasāvana, dhammasusuṣā.* For further details about Aśoka's use of *dharma*, see Olivelle, (forthcoming) and Thapar (1997).
29 Historical memory is not the same as historical accuracy. The historical memory of Aśoka was different among different groups; the Buddhists generally have a very positive view of Aśoka and his work, while the press is not entirely favorable to Aśoka in the Brahmanical tradition. With regard to the possible influence of such historical memory in shaping later Brahmanical literature, see James Fitzgerald, *The Mahābhārata: 11. The Book of Women, 12. The Book of Piece.* vol. 7. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004; and Alf Hiltebeitel, *Rethinking the Mahābhārata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharma King.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
30 The story is also found in *Bṛhaddevatā*, where we find the expression *dharmavyatikrama*, "transgression of *dharma*" (8.3).
31 See also *Nirukta*, 6.19; 8.10; 12.13. In chapter 14, generally considered to be a later addition, we also have similar use of *dharma:* 14.6, 14.

[32] See also Pāṇini 4.4.47 and 6.2.65 for *dharmyam*, and 4.2.46 for *dharmavat*. See also 5.2.132; 5.4.124.
[33] Oskar von Hinüber, *Der Beginn der Schrift und frühe Schriftlichkeit in Indien* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1989), p. 34; Harry Falk, *Schrift im alten Indien: ein Forschungsbericht mit Anmerkungen* (Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1992), p. 304.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AĀ	*Aitareya Āraṇyaka*
AB	*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*
ĀpŚr	*Āpastamba Śrautasūtra*
ĀśGṛ	*Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra*
BauGṛ	*Baudhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*
BharŚr	*Bharadvāja Śrautasūtra*
BU	*Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*
ChU	*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*
HirŚr	*Hiraṇyakeśi Śrautasūtra*
KS	*Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā*
MDh	*Mānava Dharmaśāstra*
MS	*Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā*
PārGṛ	*Pāraskara Gṛhyasūtra*
ṚV	*Ṛg Veda*
ŚāṅGṛ	*Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra*
ŚB	*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*
TĀ	*Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*
TB	*Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*
TS	*Taittirīya Saṃhitā*

TU	*Taittirīya Upaniṣad*
VS	*Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā*

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HE WHO SEES DHAMMA SEES DHAMMAS: DHAMMA IN EARLY BUDDHISM

PRELIMINARY REMARKS: BUDDHISM AND *DHARMA*

The basic subject of the present article is the understanding of the concept of *dharma* in early Buddhist literature – in the Nikāyas/Āgamas and the early *abhidhamma*/*abhidharma* texts. As it is clear that early Buddhist texts were composed in some form of Middle Indic and as my main sources will be Pali texts I shall generally use the Pali Middle Indic form *dhamma*.[1] There are three basic problems that I think need to be considered in order to present a clear account of the distinctively Buddhist understanding of *dhamma*: (1) we need to establish the range of meanings found in early Buddhist literature; (2) we need to consider the relationship between those different meanings and how they evolved; (3) we need also to consider the relationship of the distinctively Buddhist usage of *dhamma* to the usage and understanding of *dharma* more generally in Indian literature and thought, and especially in early Brahmanical writings. These problems are, of course, not entirely separable. Clearly how we map out the different early Buddhist uses and their relationship will affect how we understand the Buddhist usage in relation to the non-Buddhist usage. But equally how we map out the different early Buddhist uses and their relationship in the first place, depends in part on how we understand the Buddhist usage in relation to the non-Buddhist usage. Moreover, the complexities and subtleties of the broader Brahmanical and 'Hindu' usage mean that there is hardly a scholarly consensus on how best to pick up and follow the trail of the elusive spirit of dharma beyond the field of Buddhist literature. In the present context, then, what I should like to do is devote some space first of all to a consideration of the range of meanings *dhamma* has in early Buddhist texts, and then move on to a consideration of the evolution and development of the distinctively Buddhist usage and how that might relate to Vedic and early Brahmanical usage.

MODERN SCHOLARLY ACCOUNTS OF *DHAMMA*

As one of the basic terms of Buddhist thought *dhamma/dharma* has been the subject of a number of studies and articles over the last century or so. Mostly scholars have focused on the first problem identified above – the range of meanings found in early Buddhist literature – although they have offered some observations and even theories about the development and evolution of its usage in Buddhist thought. Less, perhaps, has been said about the relationship between the distinctively Buddhist usage and the usage in Indian thought in general. Three books devoted to the subject of Buddhist *dhamma/dharma* deserve special mention as being representative not only of the information about *dhamma/dharma* that modern scholarship has presented on the basis of the study Buddhist textual sources, but also of somewhat different approaches and emphases in considering the significance of that information. The first is the pioneering study of Magdelene and Wilhelm Geiger, *Pāli Dhamma vornehmlich in der kanonischen Literatur*, published in 1920.[2] This is a comprehensive philological study divided into four main sections, each of which considers a distinctive set of meanings of the term *dhamma*. The basic method is one of cataloguing and grouping the different uses and meanings and providing illustrative quotations from the Pali canonical literature. The four sets of meanings centre around 'law' (Gesetz), 'teaching' (Lehre), 'truth' (Wahrheit) and 'thing' (Ding, Sache). This last meaning of *dhamma* refers to the use of the term *dhamma* in early Buddhist texts to characterize simple mental and physical sates and phenomena as *dhammas*. The Geigers regard this usage of *dhamma* as far removed from its original usage, and identify the issue of how *dhamma* comes to be used in this way as the principal question to be addressed in accounting for the development of the usage of the term in Buddhist texts.[3]

Three years later Stcherbatsky published his *The Central Conception of Buddhism and the Meaning of the Word 'dharma'*.[4] Referring to the Geigers' achievement in having 'drawn up a concordance of nearly every case where the word *dhamma* occurs in Pali canonical literature', and having 'established a great variety of meanings', he comments that among the various meanings, 'there is, indeed, only one that really matters, that is the specifically Buddhistic technical term *dharma*.'[5] This specifically Buddhist technical meaning of *dharma* Stcherbatsky expresses as 'element of existence', and he takes as a basis for its exposition not the literature of the Pali canon, but a

fourth or fifth century CE work of Buddhist systematic thought, namely Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya*. Rather than seeking to consider the various meanings of *dharma/dhamma* and their relationship, Stcherbatsky focuses on just one meaning, and attempts to provide a precise philosophical account of the Buddhist conception of a *dharma* as an 'element of existence'.

Just over half a century later John Ross Carter published another book-length study: *Dhamma: Western Academic and Sinhalese Buddhist Interpretations*.[6] If the Geigers' focus was basically linguistic and philological, and Stcherbatsky's philosophical, then Carter's is more broadly religious. He begins with a survey of the account of *dharma/dhamma* given in modern scholarly studies, beginning with the work of Burnouf (1844), and taking into account writings by Spence Hardy, Childers, T.W. and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, Oldenberg, Beckh, the Geigers, Keith, Stcherbatsky, Glasenapp, Thomas, Horner, Lamotte, and Conze, among others. He then turns his attention to the understanding of *dhamma* in specifically the Theravāda Buddhist tradition, focusing not only on the Pali canonical texts, but also on the way *dhamma* has been understood in the Pali commentaries and exegetical works, as well as in later vernacular Sinhala literature. Carter states explicitly that the 'dharma-theory' and the role of *dhammas* in Buddhist systematic thought is not his main focus;[7] his book instead seeks to explore and bring out the potency of *dhamma* as a religious concept: it is the teaching of a *buddha* – a fully awakened being; it is a path of religious practice, an object of devotion worthy of reverence whose qualities are to be recollected and pondered by the practitioner in order to inspire faith and engender calm; it is a transcendent reality and 'salvific Truth'.

What I have said so far has already introduced some of the principal meanings of *dhamma/dharma* that modern scholarship has identified in the early Buddhist usage. In fact, while different scholarly authors might identify fewer or more meanings, give more or less emphasis to a particular aspect of the early Buddhist understanding of *dhamma*, or present the relationship between the different meanings in different ways, there is a basic consensus in the range of meanings identified. While no particular writer presents the usage of the term *dhamma* in precisely the following terms, I think this consensus can be summed up by way of six basic meanings:[8] (1) the 'teaching' of the Buddha; (2) 'good conduct' or 'good behaviour', in general, but also more specifically the putting into practice of the good conduct prescribed by the Buddha's teaching and constituting

the Buddhist path, namely keeping ethical precepts (*sīla*), developing calm and concentration (*samatha*, *samādhi*, *jhāna*), and insight and knowledge (*vipassanā*, *paññā*, *vijjā*) through the practice of meditation; (3) the 'truth' realized by the practice of the Buddhist path; (4) any particular 'nature' or 'quality' that something possesses; (5) the underlying and objective 'natural law or order' of things which the Buddha has discerned; (6) a basic mental or physical 'state' or 'thing', a plurality of which, at least in the texts of the Abhidhamma, becomes explicitly to be conceived as in some sense constituting the 'reality' of the world or experience. While the order of presentation here is intended to be suggestive of a possible affinity between certain meanings, it is not intended to indicate a judgement about which meanings have priority, either in terms of normative usage or in terms of historical development. Having, with the help of the work of earlier scholars, identified and set out this range of basic meanings, what I should like to do now is to consider them more closely with specific reference to the Pali Nikāyas in order to illustrate and establish, at least provisionally, the extent to which they do indeed reflect the usage of the early texts.

Teaching

To say that *dhamma* in certain Nikāya contexts means the 'teaching' of the Buddha is to say that it can refer to both the content of his teaching – what he taught, the collection of instructions and doctrines taught by the Buddha – and to the 'texts' that contain and set out those teachings. In the Nikāya period the latter are, of course, oral compositions rather than written texts and are often conceived as comprising nine 'parts' (*aṅga*); but later they are referred to as consisting of the three 'baskets' (*piṭaka*) or collections of Vinaya, Sutta, and Abhidhamma. A clear example of this kind of usage would be the sentence: 'a monk learns the *teaching* – the discourses, chants, analyses, verses, utterances, sayings, birth stories, marvels, and dialogues'.[9]

Good Conduct or Behaviour

A typical usage of the term *dhamma* in the broad sense of good, right or proper behaviour and conduct is in the context of the rule of kings: kings are described as ruling 'righteously' or 'justly' (*dhammena rajjaṃ kāreti*)[10] or as practicing 'justice' or 'righteousness' (*dhammaṃ carati*).[11] More generally a person may acquire a possession 'prop-

erly' or 'lawfully' (*dhammena*), or he may acquire it 'improperly' or 'unlawfully' (*adhammena*).[12] And while *dhamma* is characteristically used to refer to good, right and proper behaviour, we should note that it can be used more neutrally of conduct and behaviour, thus people indulge in the 'practice' of sexual intercourse (*methunaṃ dhammaṃ paṭisevati*).[13]

It is in the context of this use of *dhamma* in the sense of proper conduct and behaviour that we need to understand the extension of the use of the term *dhamma* to refer to the 'practices' taught by the Buddha for the benefit of gods and men:

> So, monks, those *practices* that I have taught to you for the purpose of higher knowledge – having properly grasped them, you should practise them, develop them, make them mature so that the spiritual life might continue and endure long; this will be for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, for the sake of compassion for the world, for the benefit, good and happiness of gods and men. And what are those *practices* ...? Just these – the four ways of establishing mindfulness, the four right endeavours, the four bases of success, the five faculties, the five powers, the seven factors of awakening, the noble eightfold path.[14]

The significant point about the use of *dhamma* in such as a passage as this, is that it is clear that at least the four ways of establishing mindfulness, the four right endeavours, the four bases of success and the noble eightfold path refer to things one does or practices; they are not 'teachings' or 'texts'. Whether the five faculties, powers and factors of awakening can be so straightforwardly characterized as 'practices' perhaps needs further consideration. I shall return to this presently.

Truth

In certain contexts meanings such as 'teaching' or 'practice' seem not to fit; a meaning closer to 'truth' – the truth about the world or reality as directly realized and taught by the Buddha – seems to be required. Thus in a number of places in the Nikāyas it is described how the Buddha by means of step by step instruction (*anupubbī kathā*) leads his listeners to a vision of the truth: he talks of giving, virtuous conduct, and heaven; he reveals the danger, vanity and impurity of sense desires, and the benefit of desirelessness; and when he sees that the hearts of his listeners are ready, open and without hindrance, are inspired and confident, then he reveals the teaching of the *truth* that is special to buddhas – suffering, its arising, its cessation, the path; and at the conclusion of such step by step instruction there arises in his listeners 'the clear and spotless vision of the *truth* (*dhamma-cakkhu*)';

the listeners are now 'ones who have seen the *truth*, gained the *truth*, known the *truth*, penetrated the *truth*, gone beyond doubt, removed their questioning, and acquired full confidence in what is taught by the Teacher without having to rely on others'.[15]

Taking *dhamma* as close to 'truth', as opposed to teaching or practice, would also seem to be appropriate in such statements as the well known 'he who sees *dhamma* sees me, he who sees me sees *dhamma*', or 'he who sees dependent arising sees *dhamma*, he who sees *dhamma* sees dependent arising'.[16] That *dhamma* in these statements means something like 'truth' is reinforced by the way in which in context they are illustrated by accounts of precisely the early Buddhist understanding of the truth about the way things are: physical form, feeling, recognition, volitions, consciousness are impermanent, suffering, and not to be taken as self; the five aggregates of attachment arise dependent on factors and conditions.

Some scholars have suggested that *dhamma* in the sense of 'truth' becomes hypostasized as the highest metaphysical principle, equivalent to the *ātman-brahman* of the Upaniṣads, almost personified.[17] Such an interpretation is, of course, controversial and certainly problematic from the point of view the interpretations of traditional Theravāda Buddhism.

Nature

In the passages referred to in the previous paragraph, the particular vision of truth that the listeners are said to have at the end of the Buddha's instruction is described in each case in the following terms: 'the *dhamma* of everything whose *dhamma* it is to arise, is to cease' (*yaṃ kiñci samudaya-dhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodha-dhamman ti*). The term *dhamma* used at the end of a *bahuvrīhi* compound in this manner has to mean something like 'nature' or 'characteristic quality': 'the *nature* of everything whose *nature* it is to arise, is to cease'. Similarly, in the 'Discourse on Establishing Mindfulness' (Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta) a monk is instructed to practice watching the *nature* of things to arise and fall away in the case of the body, feelings, and consciousness.[18] The use of *dhamma*/*dharma* at the end of a compound in the sense of a particular nature or quality possessed by something is a common usage in both Pali and Sanskrit and is not a specifically Buddhist usage. We shall return to this usage later.

Natural Law

Given that the truth one sees when one sees *dhamma* is that 'the nature of everything whose nature it is to arise, is to cease', it might seem that the truth that is *dhamma* is understood as some kind of 'law of the universe'. A number of modern scholars and interpreters have thus suggested that *dhamma* signifies the natural law or order which the world or reality conforms to. Thus T.W. Rhys Davids and William Stede in their dictionary article speak of the *dhamma* preached by the Buddha as 'the order of the law of the universe, immanent, eternal, uncreated, not as interpreted by him only, much less invented or decreed by him, but intelligible to a mind of his range, and by him made so to mankind as bodhi: revelation, awakening'.[19] Seeing *dhamma* as some form of eternal natural order or law would appear to be a more interpretative suggestion for the meaning of *dhamma* than those that we have so far considered, in that it is harder to cite passages where the translation 'Natural Law' or 'Universal Law' is clearly required by context and to be given preference over other translations. The kinds of passage referred to in order to illustrate this kind of understanding of *dhamma* are those which speak of the way things arise in dependence upon other things, or of how the mental and physical factors that make up the world (*saṃkhāra*) are all impermanent, suffering and not self, and then refer to this fact as the *dhamma-ṭṭhitatā*, the *dhamma-niyāmatā* that endures whether or not Buddhas arise in the world. Certainly these last two expressions might be translated 'the constancy of nature', 'the law of nature'. And one could also suggest that the statement quoted above – 'he who sees dependent arising sees *dhamma*' – might be rendered as 'he who sees dependent arising sees the *law*'. Yet it does not follow from such translations that we should necessarily hypostasize *dhamma* and conceive of it as some form of 'immanent, eternal, uncreated' law of the universe.[20] Possibly these two expressions should be interpreted as the constancy and law of *dhammas*, plural, rather than *dhamma*, singular,[21] and this brings us to the sixth sense of *dhamma*.

Mental or Physical State or Thing

We come now to the use of the term *dhamma* in a manner that is at once the most distinctively Buddhist and the hardest to offer a suitable translation for. Before considering the question of the appro-

priateness or not of particular translations, let us consider some examples of this usage.

Completely secluded from sense desires and unwholesome *dhammas*, a monk attains and remains in the joy and happiness of the first meditation.[22]

A monk ... endeavours so that bad, unwholesome *dhammas* that have not arisen, do not arise; ... he endeavours so that bad, unwholesome *dhammas* that have arisen are abandoned; ... he endeavours so that wholesome *dhammas* that have not arisen, arise; ... he endeavours so that wholesome *dhammas* that have arisen, are constant, not lost, increase, grow, develop, are complete.[23]

A monk ... dwells watching *dhammas* as *dhammas* ...[24]

Quite clearly to understand and translate *dhammas* as teachings, truths, laws – whether of nature or otherwise – simply will not do in the above contexts; 'practices' just might work in the first passage, but to think of 'practices' as things that have 'arisen' or 'not arisen', as such a translation would demand in the second passage, must rule it out. And when we read the full exposition of what watching *dhammas* as *dhammas* involves, such a conclusion is only reinforced. A monk dwells watching *dhammas* as *dhammas* in terms of: (1) the five hindrances – sensual desire, aversion, sleepiness and tiredness, excitement and depression, doubt – knowing whether each is present in him or not, how each arises and is abandoned such that it will not arise again; (2) the five aggregates of attachment – physical form, feeling, recognition, volitional formations, consciousness – how each arises and disappears; (3) the six senses and their respective objective fields, knowing the fetters that arise dependent on the two, how these fetters arise and are abandoned such that they will not arise again; (4) the seven constituents of awakening – mindfulness, *dhamma*-investigation, vigour, joy, tranquillity, concentration, equanimity – knowing whether each is present in him or not, how each arises and is brought to full development; (5) the four noble truths, knowing what suffering is, what the arising of suffering is, what the cessation of suffering is, what the way leading to the cessation of suffering is.

Clearly if watching *dhammas* involves watching the hindrances, the aggregates, the senses and their objects, and the constituents of awakening, then *dhammas* are not teachings, practices, truths, or laws. And while it might be possible in some contexts to take the Nikāyas as presenting the 'four noble truths' as four doctrinal propositions – 'suffering is the five aggregates of attachment' – the kind of usage above challenges such a notion. Suffering, its arising, its cessation, the way

leading to its cessation are here not 'truths' in the sense of doctrinal propositions, but realities that have to be understood.

So what are *dhammas*? In many ways it is the usage of *dhamma* at the end of a *bahuvrīhi* compound in the sense of a particular nature or quality possessed by something that seems the best fit in the present context, only here the particular natures or qualities are not possessed by anything, they are natural qualities in their own right, which the meditating monk watches arising and disappearing, some of which he strives to stop arising, and some of which he strives to keep arising.

We can define *dhammas* in this final sense as basic qualities, both mental and physical. When we consider this particular understanding of what a *dhamma* is alongside the defining of the world or experience in its entirety (*sabbaṃ*) in terms of the five aggregates or the twelve spheres of sense, then we can go one step further and say that *dhammas* are the basic qualities, both mental and physical, that in some sense constitute experience or reality in its entirety.[25] What I think is undeniable is that, whether or not one accepts this as something the Buddha himself taught, this sense and basic understanding of a *dhamma* is firmly established and imbedded in the Nikāyas. Indeed, I think it not unreasonable to suggest that it is the prevalent usage of the word *dhamma* in the Nikāyas. It is, of course, a usage that approximates to the one found in the Abhidhamma/Abhidharma, and the question of the relationship of this Nikāya usage to the more technically precise Abhidhamma/Abhidharma usage is something that I shall return to below. But before doing that I wish first to consider how the Pali commentaries approach the issue of the different senses of the word *dhamma* in the Nikāyas.

DHAMMA AND *DHAMMAS* IN THE PALI COMMENTARIES

Obviously the commentaries offer a rather more developed understanding of *dhamma* than that found in the Nikāyas and early Abhidhamma. Nevertheless, their understanding represents a tradition of interpretation that is still relatively close to the earlier texts, and provides us with important points of references for plotting the development of the usage of the term in early Buddhist thought. A number of scholars have paid some attention to the traditional expositions of *dhamma* presented in the Pali commentaries. The Geigers and PED, for example, both begin their accounts by citing lists of meanings for *dhamma* found in the commentaries to the *Dīgha*

Nikāya, *Dhammapada* and *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*.[26] But it is John Ross Carter's work that provides the fullest account of the understanding of *dhamma* found in the Pali commentaries.[27] Drawing on especially Carter's work, I wish to highlight what seem to me the most significant aspects of the way the early Buddhist exegetical tradition approaches the notion of *dhamma*.

Some six passages from the Pali commentaries explicitly explain that in the canonical texts the word *dhamma* can have various meanings which they then go on to list (see Table I).[28] The number of meanings listed ranges from 4 to 11, although each list is explicitly open ended; in aggregate 18 different possible meanings are suggested. Having listed the possible meanings, the commentaries proceed by citing illustrative passages from the canonical texts – mostly the Nikāyas and Abhidhamma. These 18 meanings can, I think, be grouped and understood by way of five principal meanings that broadly correspond to the six meanings identified above: (1) teaching or text, (2) good qualities or conduct more generally, (3) truth, (4) the natural condition of something, (5) a mental or physical quality in a technical Abhidhamma sense (see Table II). Let me comment briefly on these in turn.

The first meaning is straightforward: *dhamma* can mean the teaching of the Buddha and the texts that contain those teachings, defined as 'the word of the Buddha contained in the Three Baskets' (*tepiṭakaṃ buddha-vacanaṃ*).[29] I have grouped the next set of meanings together in that they all take *dhamma* in the sense either of the general good qualities and conduct (*guṇa*, *puñña*) promoted by Buddhist practice or are specific examples of those qualities and conduct (*samādhi*, *paññā*). I have also grouped with these an example of *dhamma* in a more general sense of practice: in the Vinaya dhamma is used to refer to the various categories of 'offence' (*āpatti*), as in 'four offences involving defeat' (*cattāro pārājikā dhammā*).[30] What I have listed as the third meaning of *dhamma* identified by the commentaries is again straightforward: in certain contexts *dhamma* should be taken as meaning the truth or, more specifically, the four truths, more or less in the same way that I have already outlined above. The fourth meaning of 'natural condition' is once again unproblematic in that it corresponds straightforwardly to a meaning that we have already noted: *dhamma* as the last member of a compound means the natural condition (*pakati*) possessed by something, thus to describe someone as *jāti-dhamma* or *jarā-dhamma* means that birth and old age are his 'natural condition' (*pakati*).[31] An alternative term used by the commentaries here is *vikāra* in the sense of disposition.[32]

Under the fifth heading I have grouped eight distinct meanings that all relate in various ways to the technical Abhidhamma understanding of a *dhamma* as a basic 'mental or physical quality'. These eight meanings fall into four subsets (see Table II).

As I have suggested above, the word *dhamma* is quite clearly already used in the Nikāyas in the sense of a basic quality, both mental and physical, a plurality of which in some sense constitutes experience or reality in its entirety. A *dhamma* in the sense of one of these basic qualities may be defined in the commentaries as a 'a particular nature' (*sabhāva*). The canonical passage referred to for the meaning of *dhamma* in the sense of *sabhāva* is the Abhidhamma matrix of triplets (*tika-mātikā*) that is set out at the beginning of the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* and is used as a basis of exposition in that text, the *Vibhaṅga*, *Dhātukathā*, and *Paṭṭhāna*; it begins 'wholesome qualities, unwholesome qualities, undetermined qualities' (*kusalā dhammā akusalā dhammā avyākatā dhammā*).[33] I shall return to the Abhidhamma understanding of *sabhāva* below.

We next have three terms – having no essence (*nissattatā*), being lifeless (*nijjīvatā*), being empty (*suññatā*) – that are perhaps best understood as relating the understanding of *dhammas* as basic qualities to the notion of 'not-self' (*anattan*). As illustrative of *dhamma* in these senses, the commentaries consistently cite two passages.[34] The first is a section from the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* explicitly called 'the section on emptiness' in the text (*suññata-vāra*), which occurs after the various mental *dhammas* or qualities that arise together constituting an instance of consciousness have been set out and defined in detail. The section states simply that 'at that time there are *dhammas*, there are aggregates, there are sense-spheres ...'[35] What the commentaries seem to be suggesting is that in stating this the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* emphasises that these *dhammas* constituting an instance of consciousness are nothing but evanescent and insubstantial non-entities that have no real essence or life of their own. The second passage cited by the commentaries in this context is one I have already referred to above, the passage describing the fourth way of establishing mindfulness by watching *dhammas* as *dhammas*. In other words, when the meditator watches *dhammas* as *dhammas* in the manner described in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, what the commentaries are suggesting is that what he is watching is the arising and disappearance of nothing but evanescent and insubstantial non-entities that have no real essence or life of their own. This ties in with the way Buddhaghosa later alludes to a number of images and similes from the Nikāyas in order

TABLE I

	Meanings	Commentary to					
		Dīgha Nikāya (Sv I 99)	Majjhima Nikāya (Ps I 17)	Dhammapada (Dhp-a I 22)	Paṭisambhidāmagga (Paṭis-a I 18)	Buddhavaṃsa (Bv-a 13)	Dhammasaṅgaṇī (As 38)
1	*Guṇa*						
	Good quality	1		1	9		3
2	*Desanā*						
	Teaching	2		2			
3	*Pariyatti*						
	Text	3	1	3	5	1	1
4	*Nissatta*(*tā*)-(*nijjīva*(*tā*))						
	Without essence/life	4		4	6		4
5	(*Catu*-)*sacca*(-*dhamma*)						
	(Four) truths		2			10	
6	*Samādhi*						
	Concentration		3			2	
7	*Paññā*						
	Wisdom		4		2	3	
8	*Pakati*						
	Natural condition		5			4	
9	*Sabhāva*						
	Particular nature		6		1	5	

10	*Suññatā*			
	Emptiness	7		6
11	*Puñña*			
	Merit	8	3	7
12	*Āpatti*			
	Offence	9	6	8
13	*Ñeyya*			
	Object of knowledge	10		9
14	*Paññatti*			
	Concept		4	
15	*Vikāra*			
	Disposition		8	
16	*Paccaya*			
	Causal condition		10	
17	*Paccayuppanna*			
	Arisen from a causal condition		11	
18	*Hetu*			
	Cause			2

TABLE II

Teaching/text	(Good) conduct	Truths	Nature	Mental/physical quality
Desanā	*Guṇa*	(*Catu-*)*sacca*	*Pakati*	*Sabhāva*
Teaching	Good quality	(Four) truths	Natural	Particular nature
Pariyatti	*Puñña*		condition	
Text	*Merit*		*Vikāra*	
	Samādhi		Disposition	
	Concentration			*Nissatta-nijjīvatā*
	Paññā			Without life
	Wisdom			*Suññatā*
	Āpatti			Emptiness
	Offence			
				Paccaya
				Causal
				condition
				Paccayuppanna
				Arisen from a
				causal condition
				Hetu
				Cause
				Ñeyya
				Object of
				knowledge
				Paññatti
				Concept

to illustrate the manner in which *dhammas* that are not lasting or solid but rather things that vanish almost as soon as they appear – like dew drops at sunrise, like a bubble on water, like a line drawn on water, like a mustard-seed placed on the point of an awl, like a flash of lightning; things that lack substance and always elude one's grasp – like a mirage, a conjuring trick, a dream, the circle formed by a whirling fire brand, a fairy city, foam, or the trunk of a banana tree.[36]

The third subset comprises three terms each of which brings out the manner in which a *dhamma* is understood as a causal condition itself (*hetu*, *paccaya*)and as something that has arisen as a result of causal conditions (*paccayuppanna*). Seeing *dhammas* in this way, while not perhaps explicit in the Nikāyas, is none the less certainly

implicit. Thus again the description of how the meditator is to watch *dhammas* as *dhammas* focuses in particular on the conditions which lead to the arising and abandoning of particular *dhammas*. As the commentaries put it in the context of dependent arising: nothing arises from a single cause, and all causes have multiple effects.[37]

Finally we have two terms that focus on *dhammas* as objects of consciousness: dhammas are 'things that can be known' (*ñeyya*), and they are concepts (*paññatti*). This last meaning of *dhamma* relates to the way *dhammas* are presented in the list of the six senses – eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind – and their corresponding objective fields – visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible sensations, *dhammas*.

As Geiger and Carter noted, in trying to evaluate the lists of terms offered as possible meanings of *dhamma* by such commentarial passages, we should not forget that they end with an 'etc.' (*ādi*) and are thus explicitly open ended. In fact, it is clear that such lists of meanings do not exhaust the commentarial and exegetical understanding of *dhamma*. There are two particular aspects of the commentarial understanding of *dhamma* that Carter has drawn attention to and which I should like to pick up on.[38] The first concerns the understanding of *dhamma* in terms of 'nine transcendent *dhammas*' (*nava lokuttara-dhammā*, *navavidha-lokuttara-dhamma*), the second is the understanding in terms of a threefold division by way of texts (*pariyatti*), practice (*paṭipatti*), and realization (*paṭivedha*) or attainment (*adhigama*).

At the beginning of his discussion of the meditation practice (*kamma-ṭṭhāna*) of recollecting *dhamma* (*dhammānussati*), Buddhaghosa makes a distinction between *dhamma* as the texts (*pariyatti*) containing the teaching of the Buddha on the one hand and transcendent *dhamma* on the other.[39] The latter is ninefold and comprises the four paths of stream entry, once-return, non-return, and arahatship, the four corresponding fruits, and *nibbāna* itself. Carter notes, citing some 40 examples, that the Pali commentaries frequently suggest that *dhamma* in the Nikāyas is to be understood as referring to the nine transcendent *dhammas*.[40] In the technical understanding of the commentaries, this refers to the four kinds of consciousness (*citta*) that arise as the attainment of the four 'paths' (*magga*), the four kinds of consciousness that arise as the attainment of the 'fruits' (*phala*) of those 'paths', and lastly *nibbāna* as the 'unconditioned element' (*asaṃkhata-dhātu*), 'object' (*ārammāṇa*) of those classes of consciousness.[41] In other words transcendent *dhamma* consists of the mind that knows and sees *nibbāna* at the moment of awakening (*bodhi*), and also of what is known and seen at that moment. Such a

usage, in fact corresponds more or less to the usage of a word like 'knowledge' in English, which can denote both the act of knowing as well as what is known.

In several places in early Buddhist texts a list of five mental 'waste lands' (*ceto-khila*) is itemized and explained. The second of these consists in having doubts about *dhamma*.[42] The commentaries take it that this means having doubts either about Buddhist texts (*pariyatti*) – that the word of the Buddha consists of 84,000 sections – or about realization (*paṭivedha*) – that the path is achieved by insight, the fruit by the path and that *nibbāna* represents the stilling of all volitional formations.[43] The understanding of *dhamma* as 'realization' relates closely to its understanding as knowledge of *nibbāna*. Elsewhere, in explanation of the expression 'the true/good *dhamma*' (*sad-dhamma*), this twofold understanding of *dhamma* is expanded to a threefold one: texts (*pariyatti*), practice (*paṭipatti*), attainment (*adhigama*), with 'practice' taken as referring to Buddhist practice in its entirety – ascetic practices, precepts, concentration, insight – and attainment to the nine transcendent *dhammas*.[44]

While the technical *specificity* of the commentarial explanations of *dhamma* is often out of place in a Nikāya context, nevertheless the *general* meanings suggested by the commentaries are more or less consonant with the range of meanings offered by modern scholars. One meaning, however, that is brought out by modern scholars, but is not highlighted by the commentators is that of 'natural law'. Nevertheless, as we have seen, some such meaning is certainly implicit in certain contexts.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BUDDHIST UNDERSTANDING OF *DHAMMA*

I noted above that the Geigers regard the usage of *dhamma* in the sense of 'thing' (or 'basic quality') as somewhat removed from its original usage, and they identify the issue of how *dhamma* comes to be used in this way as the principal question to be addressed in accounting for the development of the usage of the term in Buddhist texts. They go on to offer some brief comments on the development of this usage. They point out that the meaning of 'thing' is associated particularly with the plural usage, and that in this plural usage *dhammas* refers to the things that constitute the world of experience as perceived by the mind. It is in these things or 'norms' that the *dhamma* – the law of the world and nature consisting in the arising

and disappearance, the fleetingness and emptiness of reality – becomes manifest.[45] Thus the Geigers wish to see *dhamma* in the sense of the 'law' of the world – or, perhaps, ultimate 'truth' about reality – as basic. And the 'things' that constitute reality, eventually come to be designated 'laws' or 'truths' because seeing them, one sees *the* Law, *the* Truth. While I think this account certainly resonates with the early Buddhist understanding of *dhamma*, I do not think it adequately explains the semantic development of the word and I shall suggest an alternative model presently.

More recently Richard Gombrich has offered a somewhat different account.[46] Gombrich offers his account of the history of the way the word *dhamma* is used as a way of tracing the development of a Buddhist ontology. His starting point is that 'the Dharma' of the Buddha is both the Buddha's account *describing* his 'experience' and a message *prescribing* what to do about it. The basic Buddhist understanding of *dhamma* and the basic brahmanical understanding of *dharma* are thus alike, in so far as they at once describe the nature of reality and prescribe how to act. They thus both 'obliterate' the fact-value distinction. Turning to the usage of *dhamma* in the plural to denote 'noeta', 'phenomena' or 'things' as the objects of consciousness, Gombrich finds the key to this development in meaning in the passage from the Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta describing the practice of watching *dhammas* as *dhammas*:

> First he learns to observe physical processes in his own and other people's bodies; then he learns to be similarly aware of feelings; then of states of mind. Finally he learns to be aware of *dhammā* (plural). This has been rendered as 'his thoughts'. But the *dhammā* that the text spells out are in fact the teachings of the Buddha, such as the four noble truths. The meditator moves from thinking *about* those teachings to thinking *with* them: he learns (to use an anachronistic metaphor) to see the world through Buddhist spectacles. The Buddha's teachings come to be the same as (any) objects of thought, because anything else is (for Buddhists) unthinkable. Thus the *dhammā* are the elements of reality as understood by the Buddha.

Gombrich concludes by suggesting that it is from this specific context of meditation that the usage of *dhammas* in the plural has become generalized. If I have understood him correctly Gombrich's theory is, then, that watching (*anupassati*) *dhammas* as *dhammas* originally signified contemplating (as *anupassati* is often rendered) or thinking about the teachings of the Buddha. And because thinking about those *teachings* involves seeing the world in the Buddha's way, what you see when you think *through* (in both senses) those *teachings* are the *teachings*, which have come to represent experience in its entirety for

the meditator. While, once again, I think the way this account ties together different senses of the word *dhamma* has genuine resonances with the early Buddhist understanding of *dhamma*, I do not think it works as an account of the *history* of the way the word *dhamma* is used – for two reasons. First, because I think taking *dhamma* in the sense of the *teaching* of the Buddha as the starting point for the history of its usage is problematic. Secondly, because, as we saw above, apart from the four truths the *dhammas* that the text spells out as objects of contemplation are *not* in fact the *teachings* of the Buddha as such; certainly the Buddha of the Nikāyas teaches *about* the hindrances, the aggregates, the senses and their objects, etc., but these things are not actual teachings; moreover if we were to understand *dhammas* here in the sense of teachings *about* the hindrances, etc., we would be left with the problem of explaining why the watching of body as body, feelings as feelings, and consciousness as consciousness is not also included here under the heading of watching *dhammas* as *dhammas*. In fact I think there is a much simpler way of approaching the development of the Buddhist usage of *dhamma* in the sense of 'noeta', 'phenomena' or 'things'.

In order to begin to consider the question of the relationship of the various meanings of *dhamma* in early Buddhist literature, and the question of the development of the specifically Buddhist notion of a *dhamma* as a basic mental or physical quality (the Buddhist theory of *dhammas*), we need first of all to consider what notion and understanding of *dharma* Buddhist thought inherited and thus started with. This, however, must remain a problematic and even controversial issue, both because of the problems in dating particular understandings of *dharma* in relation to Buddhist developments, and because of the problems in agreeing the contours of the 'Hindu' understanding of *dharma*.[47] Nevertheless, I think it is possible to map out some general lines of development.

The beginnings of the Indian concept of *dharma* go back to the usage of the noun *dharman* and various verb forms derived from the root *dhṛ* in the Ṛg Veda. A well known example occurs at the close of the 'Hymn of the Man' (Puruṣasūkta):

With the sacrifice the gods sacrificed to the sacrifice. These were the first *ritual laws*.[48]

In his discussion of the Vedic usage of *dharman* Halbfass emphasises that the plural usage is the norm, commenting that 'only later did an essentially singular use as a "complex" or "totality of binding norms"

gain in prominence'.[49] The precise meaning of *dharman* in the Ṛg Veda is perhaps unclear. In the verse just quoted, O'Flaherty uses 'ritual laws', explaining in a note that these are 'archetypal patterns of behaviour established during this first sacrifice to serve as the model for all future sacrifices'.[50] In his study of *dharman* in the Ṛg Veda in the present volume, Joel Brereton emphasises the sense of 'foundation' – a sense which straightforwardly reflects its etymology and form – as the meaning common to the various contexts in which it is used. He translates:

With the sacrifice the gods sacrificed the sacrifice: these were its foundations.

He goes on to comment that these first 'foundations' can thus be understood as 'the model sacrifice instituted by the gods and replicated in human performance'; or, as he puts it later, 'they are the ritual precedents which the present rituals follow'. Halbfass likewise stresses the importance of the sense of the underlying root *dhṛ*: *dharmas* are thus things that 'support', 'uphold', 'maintain'; and referring to the work of Schayer, he characterises *dharma* in the Brāhmaṇas as 'the continuous *maintaining* of the social and cosmic order and norm which is achieved by the Aryan through the performance of his Vedic rites and traditional duties'. A.K. Warder too considers the primary sense of *dharman/dhṛ* in the Ṛg Veda as closely connected with the idea of maintaining.[51] Whatever the precise connotations of *dharman* in its earliest usage it seems clear that among its earliest uses is the use in the plural to refer to certain *practices* – primarily sacrificial rites – as maintaining and supporting things – the cosmic and social order. The underlying assumption is, of course, that maintaining and supporting the cosmic and social order is a good thing; *dharmans* are therefore *prescribed* practices.

Another *dharman* or 'foundation' that the Ṛg Veda identifies is, suggests Brereton, the foundational authority especially of Varuṇa and Mitra; this authority consists in the commandments of Varuṇa and the alliances governed by Mitra. This sense of authority is one that Patrick Olivelle's contribution to the present volume shows being taken up in the Brāhmaṇas, where *dharma* is understood as the social order founded on the authority of especially the king. And if these are the sources for the Brahmanical and general 'Hindu' understanding of *dharma*, so too are they for the Buddhist. I take it then that the plural usage of *dhamma* is something that early Buddhism inherited from earlier pre-Buddhist usage, and that for early Buddhist thought

dhammas are in the first place the practices, the kinds of behaviour, prescribed and recommended on the authority of the Buddha. That *dhamma* subsequently comes to refer to the Buddha's teaching or, in the plural, teachings is then a straightforward development, just as the English word 'prescription' can denote both the act of prescribing and what is prescribed. Indeed, 'prescription' can also denote a piece of paper handed to one by a doctor, so we have an analogous development for the way in which *dhamma* comes to mean the texts that contain the teachings of the Buddha.

In fact all this ties in precisely with the general tendency of early Buddhist thought to appropriate brahmanical terminology and reinterpret it in its own terms: the true *brāhmaṇa*, the true *ārya*, is not someone who is born as such and performs the duties and rites – the *dharmas* – laid down in the Vedas, the real *ariya-puggala* or 'noble person' is the one who takes up the practices – the *dhammas* – recommended by the Buddha and roots out greed, hatred and delusion. Though, as Patrick Olivelle points out, again in his contribution to this volume, the relationship between the Buddhist and brahmanical understanding may be more complex: while the Buddhists take over the basics of the Vedic and brahmanical understanding of *dharma*, the manner in which the notion of *dhamma* functions as a pervasive concept of religious, philosophical and ethical discourse is perhaps characteristically Buddhist; and *dharma* is developed as the central concept of Hindu thought only subsequently as a reaction to Buddhist and especially Aśokan usage.

Be that as it may, the use of *dharman/dharma* in Vedic literature in the senses of 'foundational rituals' and 'foundational authority' is sufficient to account for the development of early Buddhist *dhamma* in its normative and prescriptive senses, but what of its descriptive sense, what of *dhamma* as the truth about the ways things are? In the course of his discussion of *dharma* in Hinduism, Halbfass comments:

> Since ancient times *dharma* has also possessed a meaning which may be rendered as 'property', 'characteristic attribute', 'essential feature', or more generally as 'defining factor' or 'predicate'. Evidence of this is available since the time of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*. In classical Hindu philosophy, and most clearly in the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika, *dharma* functions as 'attribute' or 'property' in the broadest sense and is used to characterize anything that is inherent in, or predicable of, an identifiable substratum (*dharmin*).[52]

In fact this usage of *dharma* in the sense of 'property' or 'characteristic attribute' would seem to derive directly from the Vedic usage of *dharman* to refer to 'the foundational *nature* of a deity', while there

are also several places in the Brāhmaṇas and Upaniṣads where *dharma* appears to be used in a sense close to 'qualities', 'attributes' or even just 'things'.[53] The passage of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* that Halbfass cites (14.7.3.15) is one in which *dharman* occurs as the last member of a *bahuvrīhi* compound; the same passage is also found in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*: 'This self, you see, is imperishable; it has an indestructible *nature*.'[54] The linking of the technical philosophical usage of *dharma* in the sense of an attribute belonging to an underlying substratum (*dharmin*) to its usage as the last member of a *bahuvrīhi* compound is crucial. We have already noted that this kind of usage is common in early Buddhist texts, and again it would seem that it is a common usage inherited from earlier usage. So, to expand on Halbfass's remarks, to describe *y* as *x-dharma*, is to say that *y* is something that possesses the *dharma* – the attribute, the quality – that is *x*; and in philosophical, as opposed to purely grammatical, terms, the 'something' that possesses an attribute (*dharmin*) is an underlying substance. As Halbfass points out, this understanding of *dharma* and *dharmin* as attribute and substance respectively involves the use of *dharma* in terms of a passive derivation: a *dharma* is what is 'supported' or 'maintained' (*dhriyate*) by the underlying substance (*dharmin*). I think we can see a precisely parallel development of the usage of *dhamma* in Buddhist thought.

In fact I have already suggested that the early Buddhist understanding of *dhammas* as the basic mental and physical qualities that constitute experience or reality is to be related to the usage of *dhamma* at the end of a *bahuvrīhi* compound in the sense of a particular nature or quality possessed by something. To this extent the basic qualities of early Buddhist thought and the attributes of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika are the same things. The crucial difference, however, is that instead of understanding these particular natures or qualities as attributes that belong to some underlying substance, early Buddhist thought takes them as natural qualities in their own right, emphasising how they arise dependent on other qualities rather than on a substratum that is somehow more real than they are.[55]

Seeing the development of the Buddhist understanding of *dhammas* in this way also casts a somewhat different light on some of the remarks made about *dhammas* in the Pali commentaries, which are perhaps often viewed too much in the light of later controversies about the precise ontological status of *dharmas* and the Madhyamaka critique of the notion of *svabhāva* in the sense of 'inherent existence'. John Ross Carter has drawn attention to the way in which the Pali

commentaries later come to gloss *dhamma* at the end of a *bahuvrīhi* compound both by *pakati* and *sabhāva*.[56] It follows from this that when the commentaries define *dhammas* as *sabhāvas* this is not a statement about their ontological status and that *sabhāva* should not be translated as 'inherent existence', but is merely a gloss stating that *dhammas* are 'particular natures' or 'particular qualities'. Moreover when the commentators say that *dhammas* are so-called 'because they maintain (*dhārenti*) their own particular natures, or because they are maintained (*dhārīyanti*) by causal conditions',[57] this should be understood, I think, as a direct and deliberate counter to the idea of *dharmas* as 'particular natures' that are 'maintained' by an underlying substance (*dharmin*) distinct from themselves; it is not intended to define *dhammas* as ontologically irreducible entities.[58]

This gives us two basic meanings of *dhamma* in early Buddhist texts: the practices recommended by the Buddha and the basic qualities that constitute reality. The first takes *dhamma* as something normative and prescriptive, the second as something descriptive and factual. Both of these meanings essentially derive from pre-Buddhist usage but are adapted to the specifics of Buddhist thought.

The question of how the prescriptive and descriptive meanings of *dharma* are related is a general one and not specific to Buddhist thought. Halbfass refers to the work of Paul Hacker, who sees the self-conscious and deliberate linking of *dharma* in its prescriptive and descriptive senses as essentially modern and a feature of Neo-Hinduism.[59] The point here appears to be that in ancient Indian thought there was no *explicit* attempt to derive *dharma* in its prescriptive sense from *dharma* in its descriptive sense: there was no explicit suggestion that it is because your nature (*dharma*) is such, your duty (*dharma*) is such. While this may be so, it is not clear to me that such an understanding is not implicit in early Indian thought. Indeed without the latent idea that there is some sort of link between nature and norm, the way things are and the way we should behave, it seems to me difficult to explain the usage of *dharma* in these two senses – unless, that is, one regards it as some sort of semantic accident or coincidence.

In this context the observations of the moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre seem pertinent.[60] MacIntyre argues that eighteenth century European thinking about morality involved the disappearance of a hitherto taken for granted connection between the precepts of morality and the facts of human nature, such that moral philosophers, like Hume and Kant, begin to assert for the first time that

moral laws cannot be derived from factual statements, an 'ought' cannot be derived from an 'is'. MacIntyre goes on to point out that this is problematic: a statement that someone is a sea-captain suggests that he ought to do what a sea-captain ought to do. This is because a 'sea-captain' is a 'functional' concept: being a sea-captain involves functioning as a sea-captain. What MacIntyre suggests is that in the classical tradition right through to the Enlightenment the concepts used in discussions of 'morality' – how one should behave – were functional: thus for Aristotle a man's living well is precisely analogous to a harpist's playing well (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1095a 16). The relevance of this in the present context is that, if the distinction between nature and norm is not made in the first place, because a deep connection between the two is assumed, then there can be no *explicit* argument that attempts to link the two. And thus that the explicit argument that derives *dharma* as duty directly from *dharma* as nature is modern – in part a reflection, perhaps, of the conceptual framework of modern European philosophy – is hardly surprising.

In fact it seems clear that *dharman/dharma* is from the very beginning itself a functional concept: it is a foundation, and a foundation that fails to perform the functions of supporting and maintaining is not much of a foundation: for something to be a *dharma/dhamma* it must maintain and support. Thus, in the present volume, Brereton suggests that in the Ṛg Veda there is a deep connection between the foundational nature of the Ādityas and their foundational authority such that they are one and the same thing. And certainly in the case of brahmanical *dharma* it seems hard to deny a deep connection between *being* a member of a particular class (*varṇa*) at a particular stage of life (*āśrama*) and *acting* accordingly – fulfilling one's *dharma*. And when the Pali commentaries come to define the 'particular natures' that are *dhammas*, they define them by what they *do*: it is contact (*phassa*) because it contacts (*phusati*), it is will (*cetanā*) because it wills (*cetayati*), it is concentration (*samādhi*) because it places (*ādhiyati*) the mind evenly (*samaṃ*) on the object; it is trust (*saddhā*) because it trusts (*saddahati*), it is memory (*sati*) because it remembers (*sarati*).[61]

HE WHO SEES *DHAMMAS* SEES *DHAMMA*

Halbfass refers to 'a certain elusive coherence' in the various meanings and functions of *dharma* in the different traditions of Hinduism,

Buddhism, and Jainism.[62] This article has largely been an attempt to seek out that elusive coherence in the case of early Buddhist thought. I should like now to attempt to sum up by returning to the description of the practice of watching *dhammas* as *dhammas* found in the (Mahā-) Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta and by offering a paraphrase of it as a final attempt at capturing that elusive coherence. Among the *dhammas* (practices) the Buddha prescribes is this practice of watching *dhammas* (mental and physical qualities) as *dhammas*; to watch these truly as *dhammas* involves watching how they arise and disappear, how the particular qualities that one wants to abandon can be abandoned, and how the particular qualities that one wants to develop can be developed. Watching *dhammas* in this way one begins to understand how they work, and in understanding how they work one begins to understand certain truths (*sacca*) – four to be exact – about these *dhammas*: their relation to suffering, its arising, its ceasing and the way to its ceasing. And in seeing these four truths one realizes the ultimate truth – *dhamma* – about the world, the extinguishing (*nibbāna*) of the fires of greed, hatred and delusion. This reading of the (Mahā-) Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta reveals the underlying equivalence between seeing *dhammas* (that is, understanding the way mental and physical qualities arise and disappear) and seeing the *dhamma* or the truth.

In the Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta Sāriputta attributes the saying to the Buddha: 'He who sees dependent arising sees *dhamma*; he who sees *dhamma* sees dependent arising.'[63] The text goes on to explain that the five aggregates of attachment have arisen dependently (*paṭicca-samuppanna*). The commentary glosses the Buddha's saying as 'he who sees causal conditions, sees dependently arisen *dhammas*'.[64] My suggestion is that this should be read in part as a quite deliberate play on the meaning of *dhamma*, a play, moreover, that is entirely consonant with the Nikāyas. As we have seen, *dhammas* are mental and physical qualities, and seeing these *dhammas* as *dhammas* – seeing how they arise and disappear, seeing how they are dependently arisen – one sees the ultimate truth: he who sees *dhammas* sees *dhamma*.

Lest I should be misunderstood, I am not trying to impute a specific technical *abhidhamma*/*abhidharma* understanding to the Nikāyas, I am not suggesting that *dhamma* is used in early Buddhist thought in the sense of an irreducible element. The use of *dhamma* in the general sense of a mental or physical quality is quite distinct from the question of the metaphysical and ontological status of those

qualities. That *dhammas* are mental and physical qualities is one thing; in what precise sense those mental and physical qualities should be said to exist is quite another. Thus the issue of what precisely *dhammas/dharmas* are is one that is debated and discussed by the later schools – the Vibhajjavāda, the Sarvāstivāda, the Madhyamaka.[65] Nevertheless, alongside the use of *dhamma* in the Nikāyas in the senses of the practices, truths and teachings that are recommended on the authority of the Buddha, there is a further usage already firmly embedded in the Nikāyas: *dhammas* are the fundamental qualities, both mental and physical, that in some sense constitute – or better, support and maintain – experience or reality in its entirety.

In many ways it might be the English word *quality* in its range of uses in both the singular and plural that provides the single best fit for *dhamma* in early Buddhism.[66] Yet while it might be capable of carrying a wider range of appropriate meanings than some other term such as 'truth', it clearly falls short of conveying the full range of meanings. Often translators have resorted to 'teaching', 'law', 'doctrine', yet in addition to the problem of conveying the semantic range of *dhamma* such translations highlight the problem of evoking its religious and emotional power. That the precise understanding and translation of *dhamma* in early Buddhist thought should remain elusive and hard to pin down is perhaps fitting. It is, after all, profound, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, beyond the sphere of mere reasoning, subtle, to be experienced by the wise – something that the buddhas of the past, present and future honour and to which they pay respect.[67]

NOTES

[1] I make no attempt in what follows to distinguish what the Buddha taught from what the Nikāyas/Āgamas in general teach. This does not mean that I consider that the Buddha taught everything just as the Nikāyas/Āgamas say he did. It does mean, however, that I think there are serious methodological flaws in attempting to distinguish in the Nikāyas/Āgamas two clear categories consisting of 'authentic' teachings of the Buddha on the one hand and later 'inauthentic' interpretations on the other. It follows from this that my drawing principally on the Pali sources is not to be taken as indicating that they are necessarily a more 'authentic' witness of early Buddhist thought – apart from the obvious fact that they are preserved in an ancient Indian language which must be relatively close to the kind of dialect or dialects used by the Buddha and his first disciples – than the Chinese Āgamas. In any case, it would seem that any account of early Buddhist thought based on the Chinese Āgamas would be essentially similar to an account based on the Pali Nikāyas. As

Étienne Lamotte has observed, the doctrinal basis common to the Chinese Āgamas and Pali Nikāyas is remarkably uniform; such variations as exist affect only the mode of expression or the arrangement of topics; see Lamotte (1988, p. 156).

[2] Geiger and Geiger (1920).

[3] Geiger, and Geiger (1920, p. 8)

[4] Stcherbatsky (1923).

[5] Stcherbatsky (1923, p. 1)

[6] Carter (1978).

[7] Pp. 48–49.

[8] Edward Conze, for example, has distinguished seven meanings as 'philosophically important': (1) transcendent reality, (2) the order of law of the universe, (3) a truly real event, (4) objective data of the mind, (5) quality or property, (6) right behaviour and religious practice, (7) the Buddha's teaching. These seven meanings more or less correspond to the six I have suggested, although I in effect have subsumed his (3) and (4) under my (6). See Conze (1962, pp. 92–94).

[9] *Bhikkhu dhammaṃ pariyāpuṇāti suttaṃ geyyaṃ veyyākaraṇaṃ gāthaṃ udānaṃ itivuttakaṃ jātakaṃ abbhutadhammaṃ vedallaṃ* (M I 133f; A II 103f, 108f, 178f, 185f; III 86f, 177f). The precise referent of the terms that make up the *aṅgas* or parts of Buddhist texts are problematic; see von Hinüber (1994).

[10] A IV 90.

[11] M II 78.

[12] M II 257.

[13] D II 9, 88, 95; M I 523; III 125.

[14] D II 119–120: *ye vo mayā dhammā abhiññāya desitā te vo sādhukaṃ uggahetvā āsevitabbā bhāvetabbā bahulīkātabbā yathayidaṃ brahmacariyaṃ addhaniyaṃ assa ciraṭṭhitikaṃ. tadassa bahujana-hitāya bahujana-sukhāya lokānukampāya atthāya hitāya sukhāya deva-manussānaṃ. katame ca te bhikkhave dhammā ... seyyathidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā cattāro sammappadhānā cattāro iddhipādā pañc' indriyāni pañca balāni satta bojjhaṅgā ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo.* See also D II 127–128; M II 238, 245.

[15] E.g. D I 110: *bhagavā anupubbiṃ kathaṃ kathesi, seyyathidaṃ dāna-kathaṃ sīla-kathaṃ sagga-kathaṃ; kāmānaṃ ādīnavaṃ okāraṃ saṃkilesaṃ, nekkhamme ānisaṃsaṃ pakāsesi. yadā bhagavā aññāsi brāhmaṇaṃ Pokkharasātiṃ kalla-cittaṃ mudu-cittaṃ vinīvaraṇa-cittaṃ udagga-cittaṃ pasanna-cittaṃ, atha yā buddhānaṃ sāmukkaṃsikā dhamma-desanā, taṃ pakāsesi dukkhaṃ samudayaṃ nirodhaṃ maggaṃ ... brāhmaṇassa Pokkharasātissa tasmiññ eva āsane virajaṃ vīta-malaṃ dhamma-cakkhuṃ udapādi ... atha kho brāhmaṇo Pokkharasāti diṭṭha-dhammo patta-dhammo vidita-dhammo pariyogāḷha-dhammo tiṇṇa-vicikiccho vigata-kathaṃkatho vesārajja-ppatto aparappaccayo satthu sāsane.* See also D I 149; M I 380, 501; II 146.

[16] S III 120: *yo kho Vakkali dhammaṃ passati so maṃ passati. yo maṃ passati so dhammaṃ passati.* M I 190–191: *yo paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passati so dhammaṃ passati. yo dhammaṃ passati so paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passati.*

[17] See Carter (1978, p. 13).

[18] D II 292 = M I 56: *samudaya-dhammānupassī ... viharati, vaya-dhammānupassī ... viharati.* It is possible that we should simply translate here 'the *quality* or *nature* of arising and falling away', since it is not clear whether *samudaya-dhamma* and *vaya-dhamma* should be construed with reference to a *bahuvrīhi* usage describing the nature of the unstated 'body', etc. The commentaries, in fact, construe the phrase as 'watching the conditions for arising and falling away' with reference to a more technical *abhidhamma* understanding of *dhamma*, allowing however that 'nature' is also a possible interpretation. See Gethin (1992, p. 55) and von Rosspatt (1995, pp. 203–205, n. 433).

[19] PED s.v. Dhamma (p. 336, column 1).

[20] Cf. Rahula (1974).

21 Warder, (1971, pp. 285, 288).
22 D I 73: *so vivicceva kāmehi, vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pīti-sukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati.* This is a stock description of the attainment of the first *jhāna* and occurs in many other places.
23 D III 221: *bhikkhu anuppannānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ anuppādāya ... padahati. uppannānaṃ pāpakānaṃ akusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānāya ... padahati. anuppannānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ uppādāya ... padahati. uppannānaṃ kusalānaṃ dhammānaṃ ṭhitiyā asammosāya bhiyyobhāvāya vepullāya bhāvanāya pāripūriyā ... padahati.* This is the stock account of the 'four right endeavours' and again occurs in many places.
24 D II 290: *bhikkhu ... dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati.* This is the stock description of the fourth way of establishing mindfulness and once more occurs in many places.
25 See Gethin (1986). For the twelve spheres of sense as the world or experience in its entirety (*sabbaṃ*), see S IV 15.
26 Geiger and Geiger (1923, p. 4); PED s.v. Dhamma.
27 See Carter (1976); Carter (1978, pp. 58–135).
28 Five of these passages (Sv I 99, Ps I 17, Dhp-a I 22, Bv-a 13, As 38) are discussed by Carter (see previous note); a sixth passage (Paṭis-a I 18) is not noted by him.
29 Sp IV 874; Sv III 1030; Ps II 68; Mp I 87; III 325; Vibh-a 504.
30 Vin II 109.
31 Ps I 17 and Bv-a 13 cite *jāti-dhammā jarā-dhammā atho maraṇa-dhammino* as an example of *dhamma* in the sense of *pakati*; Carter (1978, p. 61) takes this as a reference to M I 161–162, which, however, reads *ekacco attanā jāti-dhammo samāno jāti-dhammaṃ yeva pariyesati, attanā jarā-dhammo ... attanā maraṇa-dhammo samāno maraṇa-dhammaṃ yeva pariyesati.* In fact, a search of CSCD gives no actual example of the text precisely as quoted by Ps and Bv-a, only the variant *vyādhi-dhammā jarā-dhammā atho maraṇa-dhammino* (A I 147; III 75).
32 Paṭis-a I 18: *jāti-dhammā jarā-dhammā maraṇa-dhammā ti ādīsu vikāre.*
33 Ps I 17: *kusalā dhammā ti ādīsu sabhāve.* Paṭis-a I 18 *ayañ hi kusalā dhammā akusalā dhammā avyākatā dhammā ti ādīsu sabhāve dissati.*
34 Sv I 99: *tasmiṃ kho pana samaye dhammā honti khandhā hontī ti ādīsu nissatte.* Ps I 17: *tasmiṃ kho pana samaye dhammā hontī ti ādīsu suññatāyaṃ.* Dhp-a I 22: *tasmiṃ kho pana samaye dhammā honti khandhā hontī ti ayaṃ nissatta-dhammo nāma nijjīva-dhammo ti pi eso eva.* Paṭis-a I 18: *tasmiṃ kho pana samaye dhammā honti, dhammesu dhammānupassī viharatī ti ādīsu nissattatāyaṃ.* As 38: *tasmiṃ kho pana samaye dhammā honti, dhammesu dhammānupassī viharatī ti ādīsu nissatta-nijjīvatāyaṃ.*
35 Dhs 25: *tasmiṃ kho pana samaye dhammā honti, khandhā honti, āyatanāni honti.* For a brief discussion of the structure of the Dhs treatment of the arising of consciousness, see Gethin (1992, pp. 312–314).
36 Vism XX 104; cf. Gethin (1998, p. 190).
37 Vism VII 105–107, Vibh-a 147–148.
38 Carter (1978, pp. 115–129, 131–135).
39 Vism VII 68.
40 Carter (1978, p. 122).
41 See Cousins (1984).
42 M I 101: *dhamme kaṅkhati vicikicchati nādhimuccati na sampasīdati.*
43 Sv III 1030 = Ps II 68 = Mp III 325 = Vibh-a 504: *pariyatti-dhamme kaṅkhamāno tepiṭakaṃ buddha-vacanaṃ caturāsīti-dhamma-kkhandha-sahassānī ti vadanti atthi nu kho etaṃ natthī ti kaṅkhati. paṭivedha-dhamme kaṅkhamāno vipassanānissando maggo nāma magganissandaṃ phalaṃ nāma sabba-saṅkhāra-paṭinissaggo nibbānaṃ nāmā ti vadanti taṃ atthi nu kho natthī ti kaṅkhati.*

44 Sp I 225–226 = Mp V 33: *tividho saddhammo pariyatti-saddhammo paṭipatti-saddhammo adhigama-saddhammo ti. tattha sakalam pi buddha-vacanaṃ pariyatti-saddhammo nāma. terasa dhutaguṇā cāritta-vāritta-sīla-samādhi-vipassanā ti ayaṃ paṭipatti-saddhammo nāma. navalokuttara-dhammo adhigama-saddhammo nāma.*

45 Geiger, and Geiger (1923, pp. 8–9): Wenn *dh.* die Dingbedeutung hat, wird es auch zumeist in der Mehrzahl gebraucht. Es werden damit die Dinge der Erscheinungswelt, bezeichnet, wie sie vom *manas*, dem inneren Sinn wahrgenommen werden. In diesen Dingen oder "Normen" offenbart sich aber eben der *dh.*, d. h. das Natur- und Weltgesetz von dem ewigen Werden und Vergehen, von der Flüchtigkeit und Nichtigkeit alles Seins.

46 Gombrich (1996, pp. 34–36).

47 See Halbfass's two essays on *dharma* in his *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*: '*Dharma* in the Self-understanding of Traditional Hinduism' (pp. 311–333) and 'Reinterpretations of *Dharma* in Modern Hinduism' (pp. 334–348).

48 RV 10.90: *yajñena yajñam ayajanta devās tāni dharmāṇi prathamāny āsan.* Translation quoted from O'Flaherty (1981 p. 31).

49 Halbfass (1988, p. 314); he cites Chāndogya Upaniṣad 2.23.1 and Taittirīya Upaniṣad 1.11.1 for the singular usage.

50 O'Flaherty (1981, p. 32).

51 Warder (1971, p. 275).

52 Halbfass (1988, p. 334).

53 See section 4 of Joel Brereton's contribution to this volume, and Patrick Olivelle's discussion of Śatapatha Brāhamaṇa 11.5.7.1 and Chāndogya Upaniṣad 2.1.4.

54 4.5.14: *avināśī vā are 'yam ātmānucchittidharmā.* Text and translation quoted from Olivelle (1998, pp. 130–131).

55 Warder (1971, p. 274) raises the question of the usage of *dharma* and *dharmin* in Indian logic and its possible connection to the Buddhist understanding of a *dharma* as an element of experience, but somewhat curiously, in my view, opts to treat them as homonyms, whose homonymity is however, 'probably not accidental'.

56 Carter (1978, p. 61) cites Ps II 170, Spk I 159; see also Spk II 41 where *khaya-dhamma* is glossed as *khaya-sabhāva.*

57 As 39: *attano pana sabhāvaṃ dhārentī ti dhammā. dhārīyanti vā paccayehi, dhārīyanti vā yathā-sabhāvato ti dhammā.* (cf. Nidd-a I 16; Paṭis-a I 18; Moh 6)

58 The point that the commentarial definition of a *dhamma* as that which carries its 'own nature' should not be interpreted as implying that a *dhamma* is a substantial bearer of its qualities or 'own-nature' has been made by Nyanaponika (1998, pp. 40–41) and Karunadasa (1996, pp. 14–16).

59 Halbfass (1988, p. 334).

60 MacIntyre (1985, pp. 57–59, 83–84).

61 Vism XIV 134, 135, 139, 140, 141.

62 Halbfass (1988, p. 317).

63 M I 190–191: *yo paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passati so dhammaṃ passati, yo dhammaṃ passati so paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passati.* The saying is also found in the Chinese equivalent of this *sutta*, see T. 26, 467a; I am grateful to Kin-Tung Yit for this reference.

64 Ps II 230: *yo paṭiccasamuppādaṃ passatī ti yo paccaye passati. so dhammaṃ passatī ti so paṭiccasamuppanna-dhamme passati.*

65 The issue of the development of the ontology of *dhammas* in early Buddhist thought is one that has been partially explored in Gal (2003).

66 Cf. Warder (1971, pp. 283, 290).

67 M I 167: *dhammo gambhīro duddaso duranubodho santo paṇīto atakkāvacaro nipuṇo paṇḍita-vedanīyo.* S I 138–140: *dhammaññeva sakkatvā garuṃ katvā.*

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ABBREVIATIONS

Unless otherwise stated editions of Pali texts are those of the Pali Text Society, Oxford.

A	Aṅguttara Nikāya
As	Atthasālinī (= Dhammasaṅgaṇī-aṭṭhakathā)
Bv-a	Buddhavaṃsa-aṭṭhakathā
CSCD	*Chaṭṭha Saṅgāyana CD-ROM*, Version 3.0 (Igatpuri: Vipassana Research Institute, 1999).
D	Dīgha Nikāya
Dhp-a	Dhammapada-aṭṭhakathā
Dhs	Dhammasaṅgaṇī
M	Majjhima Nikāya
Moh	Mohavicchedanī
Mp	Manorathapūraṇī
Nidd-a	Niddesa-aṭṭhakathā
Paṭis-a	Paṭisambhidāmagga-aṭṭhakathā
PED	T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, *Pali-English Dictionary* (London: Pali Text Society, 1921–1925).
Ps	Papañcasūdanī
S	Saṃyutta Nikāya
Sp	Samantpāsādikā
Spk	Sāratthappakāsinī
Sv	Sumaṅgalavilāsinī
Vibh-a	Sammohavinodanī
Vin	Vinaya
Vism	Visuddhimagga

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COLLETT COX

FROM CATEGORY TO ONTOLOGY: THE CHANGING ROLE OF *DHARMA* IN SARVĀSTIVĀDA ABHIDHARMA

From Eugène BURNOUF's simple rendering "law"[1] (*loi*) to the 16 primary meanings and dozens of secondary meanings and collocations listed by Magdalene and Wilhelm Geiger,[2] perhaps no term in Indian Buddhism has generated more extensive study or greater disagreement than *dharma*. Certainly, the term is not easily understood or translated; explicit interpretations when offered inevitably reflect both the variety of source materials and the diversity of methodological approaches employed.[3] The difficulty in finding a suitable translation or presenting a unified interpretation arises from the undeniable fact that the term *dharma* is indeed used by the Indian Buddhist sources themselves with different connotations.[4] Like all religious concepts, *dharma* is an historical construct, whose sense and function have been continuously refashioned and adjusted to fit changing needs. The most problematic of these senses, first encountered in the *sūtras*,[5] becomes the focus of later scholastic exegesis in Abhidharma literature, where its function is expanded with meanings and connotations for which there are no *sūtra* precedents. This is *dharma* in the sense that has been variously translated or glossed by factor, thing, element, constituent, phenomenon, event, datum, property, quality, fundamental existent, reality, or not infrequently left untranslated. The divergence between *dharma* as an individual "factor" and *dharma* in the sense of "law," "truth," or "teaching" presents a contrast that scholars have found difficult to reconcile. What, if anything, do these patently different senses have in common? If law is the original *sūtra* sense, then where does this sense of *dharma* as an individual "factor" originate, and should it be considered "distinctively Buddhist?" How was the term used within Abhidharma, specifically within the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma literature, and what is the relationship between *dharma* and other terms used to explain and elaborate it such as *bhāva*, *svabhāva*, *dravya*, and *svalakṣaṇa*?

Most scholarly treatments of *dharma* follow the lead of the Geigers in listing a variety of senses, with little consideration of how they are to be conceptually or historically related. Issues of historical inter-

connections among the various usages within Buddhist sources and contextual connections with the non-Buddhist milieu are most often left unexplored, and for good reason, since delineating these historical and contextual connections in the context of early Indian scholasticism, although of the utmost significance for understanding doctrinal development, presents almost insurmountable difficulties. Certainly, these early traditions were complex historical phenomena, a tapestry woven in often unexpected directions as a result of both internal dynamics and external influences and events. Yet unraveling this historical interplay is complicated by the dearth of independent and contemporaneous, external sources and by the continuous recasting and reappropriation of prior materials by each tradition in order to facilitate an authoritative and yet unacknowledged reconstitution of itself. The convoluted pattern of doctrinal development is masked both by textual emendation that effaces perceived contradictions and by the retrojection of newly formulated interpretations. Attempts to fill in gaps in the historical record by reconstructing supposedly logical patterns of doctrinal development are fraught with danger: namely, that we project our own transparent values and premises or those of later tradition back onto a process that was driven by multiple factors now largely alien and opaque. Although provisional and incomplete, we must content ourselves at this stage with recovering the terminological traces left by the paths and byways of the now obscure historical interplay, and not jump to conclusions that preclude the results of further textual investigation.

A FUNDAMENTAL SENSE OF THE TERM *DHARMA*?

Our own inquiry thus must begin with the resigned acknowledgement that the ultimate origin of the various uses of the term *dharma* is obscure and that their historical development or inter-traditional diffusion is impossible to determine. Nevertheless, we can proceed by comparing parallel terminology and arguments that highlight distinctive interpretative actions within specific texts and suggest possible routes of doctrinal exchange. Fortunately, some scholars have already undertaken such comparisons, and have considered both the nuances that unite the seemingly disparate Buddhist uses of the term as well as possible connections with similar concepts or terms in non-Buddhist sources. For example, Johannes BRONKHORST, adopting the position that *dharma* in the sense of "element" is derived from *dharma* as "teaching," observes that "efforts were made to distill the

most important ideas and concepts from [the Buddha's] teaching ... [which] gave rise to lists of so-called *dharmas*."[6] BRONKHORST explains this linkage between "element" and "teaching" by noting that "[i]n their efforts to preserve the teaching of the Buddha, the early Buddhists were not content to memorise his own words. They also enumerated the elements contained in his teaching, and this led to the creation of lists of so-called *dharmas*."[7] Specifying further, BRONKHORST suggests that the later "peculiarly Buddhist" sense of *dharma* as "element" might be traced to a particular, early analytical matrix (*mātṛkā*) or list of categories consisting of psychic characteristics or *dharmas* intended as a summary of the teaching of the Buddha. This initial list then inspired or served as the direct basis for subsequent enumerative lists, to which the term *dharma* was naturally extended.[8]

Following a related meaning, Akira HIRAKAWA espouses the view that the Buddhist sense of the term as individual "factor" is distinctive, and yet connects it to other non-Buddhist uses: namely, as "that aspect of phenomena that has the quality of truth – that is, of having an enduring quality."[9] Similarly, I.B. HORNER claims that *dhamma* refers to the "natural state or condition of beings and things, the law of their being, what it is right for them to be, the very stuff of their being, *evaṃ-dhammo*. If they are what it is right for them to be ... they are true to themselves. So dhamma also means truth, with the derived meaning of 'religious' truth, hence the Buddhist doctrine ..."[10] Wilhelm HALBFASS emphasizes the etymological sense of *dharman/dharma* as "upholding" and connects this sense with what he terms a Vedic "ontology of openness" exemplified in creative rituals of separation and maintenance and contrasted with a concurrent but separate "ontology of substance."[11] As he states, "[i]n spite of all subsequent oblivion and obscuration, the Vedic cosmogonies of separation and opening, as well as the associated idea of an 'upholding' *dharma* of such openness and the polarities and distinctions that appear within it, have had their echoes and extensions in the systematic philosophies of Buddhism and Hinduism."[12] Hence, for HALBFASS, the later scholastic use of the term to denote the discriminated constituents of experience originates in the Vedic senses of maintenance and separation.

Hajime SAKURABE adopts a related perspective, beginning from *dharma* in its etymological sense of "upholding" or "maintaining," which becomes manifest in the meanings order, norm, virtue, truth and finally the Buddha's teaching. A distinctive Buddhist sense of

"thing" or "entity" or that which "exists in accordance with principle or order" can then be derived from this fundamental, etymological sense. He emphasizes that *dharmas* should not be thought of as indicating things or their essences in isolation, but rather as constituting a complex network of causal interaction that structures ordinary experience.[13] Rupert GETHIN argues for an interpretation of *dhamma* that would combine its uses in the singular as teaching with those in the plural, and suggests that the notion of *dhammas* as distinct, irreducible elements, especially as developed in Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma, cannot readily be transferred to *dhammas* in the plural within Pāli materials. *Dhammas* are preeminently mental events, specifically their capabilities and activities, and hence are dynamic, rather than static. And as GETHIN notes, "the question of the relationship between *dhamma* and *dhammas* is perhaps most easily seen with reference to *paṭicca-samuppāda* [dependent origination]. It is stated in the Nikāyas that he who sees *paṭicca-samuppāda* sees *dhamma*, and that he who sees *dhamma* sees *paṭicca-samuppāda.* This is in fact a very succinct statement of the principle involved, for what is *paṭicca-samuppāda* apart from the inter-relatedness of *dhammas*?"[14]

A similar view is offered by A.K. WARDER who traces the term *dhamma* through both Vedic sources and early Buddhist Nikāya materials in an attempt to uncover a single connotation that would unite its divergent uses. From his review of the terms *dharman/dharma* in Vedic sources, WARDER concludes that it is a dynamic conception referring not to a permanent state, but to a force that maintains the universe, a regularity or constancy of proper actions or events.[15] Turning to the Nikāya materials, WARDER lists a variety of specific uses of *dhamma* and proposes similarities in context and meaning that are consistent with its Vedic meanings: namely, as "regularities in the universe or as forces operating in it." Specifically, he states, "[t]he conception is still dynamic: the *dhammas* are events, or classes of event, though they may perhaps be said to be grouped or defined through their qualities." The Nikāyas refer to the "reality" of *dhammas*, but "[t]his reality is not inconsistent with the impermanence of the *dhammas*; it does not imply that they continue but only that they really occur under the proper conditions."[16] The Abhidhamma sense of the term *dhamma* is not distinctive, WARDER contends, but is anticipated in both the general description and the tentative classifications of *dhammas* offered in the Pāli Nikāyas. WARDER concludes that "regularity" is the key concept in the notion of *dhamma,* a regularity that is evident in the ordered, conditioned

interaction of impermanent experienced events. The "*dhamma* hypothesis" constitutes more than a simple list of constituent elements; it seeks the '"real"' laws of nature underlying the surface appearance of things, the 'real' forces underlying the personifications of superstition, the 'real' way the universe works underlying the imaginary terrors of religion and the imaginary rule of '"gods."'[17] WARDER thus argues against any conception of *dhamma* as a static substance, and suggests instead that *dhamma*s are types or classes of properties or events and therefore constitute fundamental regularities underlying and structuring the "apparent chaos of data."

THE INTER-TRADITIONAL CONTEXT

This dynamic conception of *dharma* as the efficacy of experienced events functioning in complex patterns of conditioned, "regular" interaction is helpful in considering the later Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma uses of the term and its elaboration through a variety of different concepts such as *bhāva*, *svabhāva*, *dravya*, *prajñapti*, *svalakṣaṇa*, and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*. What sense do these different characterizations of *dharma*s convey? And in the particular case of the Sarvāstivādins, what is the connection between their interpretation of *dharma*s and their assertion that "everything exists?" Does this assertion entail a substantialist view of *dharma*s, and if so, in what sense do they accept the fundamental Buddhist position that *dharma*s are impermanent?

To clarify the later scholastic sense of the term *dharma*, one cannot begin by assuming that Buddhist usage developed solely within a Buddhist context and by ignoring the virtual certainty of mutual influence, even in the early period, among Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions: namely, the contemporaneous, early scholastic or analytical movements within grammar, Buddhism, Sāṃkhya, Jainism, and Vaiśeṣika. In the case of the later scholastic elaborations, inter-traditional influence is clearly indicated by the shared terminology, categories, exegetical methods, and philosophical concerns. These similarities suggest a nexus of related concepts and issues that followed a complex path of development within and among the various traditions, influenced both by a logic internal to each tradition and by exchange with other traditions engaged in similar investigations. Establishing the point of origin and the direction of diffusion is complicated, however, first and foremost by the com-

paratively recent date of the available classical sources and by the difficulty of determining their relative dating.[18]

Space does not permit a thorough presentation of the scholarship on this problem of early scholastic, inter-traditional influence, but several relevant issues and fruitful lines of inquiry should be mentioned. First, at the very least, the similarity in terminology is unmistakable, and the earliest classical sources present notable parallels in their interpretations of terms such as *dravya*, *guṇa*, *bhāva*, and *svabhāva*. But what clues do we have for their meaning in the initial period of their formation? For example, the term *dravya*, so significant in later Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma interpretations of *dharma*s, does not appear in its later, mature sense as "really existent entity" either within the Buddhist *sūtra*s or the earliest Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma discussions. We do, however, find suggestive usages in the early grammatical literature, although there the meaning of the term *dravya* is still variable, as the interpretations recorded in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* attest.[19] Under a discussion of Pāṇini's *sūtra* 1.2.64, Patañjali (following Kātyāyana) records the contrasting views of the grammarians Vājapyāyana, who maintained that words refer to a class property (or feature) (*ākṛti*), and Vyāḍi, who maintained that words refer to an individual object (or entity) (*dravya*). Patañjali himself proposes a compromise view: namely, that a word can refer to either a class property or an individual object.[20] Elsewhere in a discussion of the relation between *dravya* and quality (*guṇa*), Patañjali expands upon the sense of the term *dravya*,[21] which he suggests can refer to an entity having a distinctive nature, as in the case of cotton and iron that are distinguished by different weights, or a sword and a piece of cloth that are distinguished in terms of their ability to cut. *Dravya* can also refer to a whole or aggregation of changing qualities, as in the case of a mango or jujube fruit that change color as green, yellow, or red as they ripen. *Dravya* in this latter sense is glossed as *guṇasaṃdrāva*, a "confluence of qualities," or as *guṇasamudāya*, "collection of qualities".

These discussions raise the all-important problem of the nature of experienced objects, specifically in terms of the relation between qualities and substratum, the part and the whole, the particular and universal, or change and stability. The two senses of *dravya* offered by Patañjali, that is, as an individual object or as an aggregation of qualities, resonate with discussions of these issues in Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika, Jaina, and Buddhist sources. For example, in Sāṃkhya, a change in the concept of *dravya* can be observed from an early

interpretation as a collection of qualities to a later view proposing that *dravyas* are characterized by both an unchanging substrate (*dharmin*) and properties (*dharma*) that undergo transformation (*pariṇāma*).[22] Vaiśeṣika sources describe *dravyas* as entities that serve as substratum causes (*samavāyikāraṇa*) and are possessed of separate qualities (*guṇa*) and activities (*kriyā*).[23] The early Jaina scholastic text, the *Tattvārthādhigamasūtra*, uses the concept of *dravya* to define existence (*sat*), which is possessed of arising (*utpāda*), passing away (*vyaya*), and stability (*dhrauvya*). It also adopts a distinction between substance and quality whereby substance is possessed of both defining qualities (*guṇa*) and changing modes (*paryāya*).[24] The Jaina exegete Kundakunda proposes a similar view, but adds the qualification that *dravya* is also characterized by intrinsic nature (*sahāva*), which has the nature of existence (*sabbhāva*) and is not abandoned despite the arising, passing away, and modifications that occur.[25] Thus, beyond the shared terminology we see a common complex of ontological and epistemological problems that informed reflection and debate within and among these various traditions.

THE PURPOSE OF "*DHARMIC*" ANALYSIS

The Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma analysis of the character and activity of *dharmas* must be viewed as an integral part of this complex of early scholastic inquiry. Indeed, the early, emergent scholasticism of Sāṃkhya, Vaiśeṣika, and Buddhism was all directed by a similar intention: that is, a refusal to accept the world as it presents itself to untutored, common sense and a desire to analyze experience into its salient, functional constituents. In the case of Buddhism, this analysis reveals the structure of the conditioning interconnections that underlie the gross, composite objects of ordinary experience, interconnections that are not arbitrary, but are considered to be "true" or, in Buddhist parlance, to represent the "way things really are" (*yathābhūta*).

Deconstructing analysis is the key scholastic activity, but, at least in the early period, it is an analysis that focuses on the distinguishing relationships among the constituent factors, rather than on the distinctive character or ontological status of the individual analytical products. Initially, the primary concern is immediately soteriological and is directed toward supplanting defiling or ensnaring *dharmas* with those conducive to liberation. In the case of Buddhism, this soteriologically motivated analysis is most succinctly represented by the

term *dharmapravicaya*, the "discrimination" or "discernment of *dharmas*," which holds a significant place throughout the history of Indian Buddhist praxis. From the earliest period onward, the discrimination of *dharmas* is listed among the seven members of enlightenment (*bodhyaṅgadharma*), which are subsumed within the most enduring, summary presentation of Buddhist praxis – the 37 limbs of enlightenment (*bodhipakṣyadharma*).[26] The formulaic description of the discrimination of *dharmas* in the Pāli *suttas* suggests that it functions specifically through insight (P *paññā*), by which one discriminates, investigates, and reflects thoroughly upon *dhammas*.[27] And indeed, the discrimination of *dharmas* and insight (*paññā*) occur frequently in tandem within the Pāli canonical Abhidharma materials, and are explicitly equated in the commentarial literature.[28]

Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts also link *dharmapravicaya* with insight (*prajñā*) as well as with other soteriologically efficacious mental *dharmas* such as correct view (*samyagdṛṣṭi*).[29] Abhidharma itself is defined as insight (*prajñā*), which is then identified with *dharmapravicaya*[30] that discriminates *dharmas* according to their intrinsic nature, or according to their particular inherent (*svalakṣaṇa*) and generic characteristics (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*).[31] The activity of discriminating *dharmas* is compared to the skill of a jeweler who can recognize and distinguish any stone,[32] and as insight it becomes the sword that cuts off defilements preventing them from ever arising again.[33] Yaśomitra explains "discrimination" (*pravicaya*) as the practice by which *dharmas* that are mixed together (*saṃkīrṇa*) are discriminated (*pravicīyante*) or "picked up" (*uccīyante*) as in the case of flowers, such that one observes: "these [*dharmas*] are tending toward contamination; these are not tending toward contamination; these are possessed of material form; these are not possessed of material form."[34] And this discrimination of *dharmas* that constitutes the essence of Abhidharma is ultimately soteriological since it provides the only method by which one can understand the processes of causal interaction among all aspects of experience and pacify defilements that result in endless rebirth and suffering.[35] As the early Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts make clear, the discrimination of *dharmas* acts by separating and clarifying *dharmas* of all categories, in particular by distinguishing events that are unvirtuous and result in suffering from those that are virtuous and lead to liberation; the former are to be abandoned, and the latter to be cultivated.[36] Hence, this discrimination of *dharmas* is not only cited within the context of the specific set of seven members of enlightenment, but also appears

in conjunction with the cultivation of virtually all forms of correct views or knowledge as the first stage in a standard series of mental cultivations that culminate in the faculty of discerning (*vipaśyanā*).[37]

Hence, the discrimination of *dharma*s has a dual soteriological purpose involving two simultaneous processes.[38] First, "evaluative" analysis, ultimately informed by the praxis-oriented goals of purification and liberation, isolates events significant to practice and clearly distinguishes those virtuous events that are to be cultivated from the unvirtuous that are to be abandoned. And second, exhaustive, "descriptive" analysis of ordinary experience reveals its "true" implicit structure and thereby undermines the commonplace entities that become ready objects of desire and attachment. Through *dharmic* discrimination, each experienced event is analyzed to bring out its constituent and, most importantly, soteriologically efficacious components.

"*DHARMIC*" ANALYSIS AS CATEGORIZATION

This dual purpose of evaluation and of description is then expressed in a variety of different analytical matrices (*mātṛkā*) or lists of categories, which themselves constitute the *dharma*s. On the one hand, the lists of categories represent the salient experiential distinctions grounded in the observed properties or activities by which *dharma*s are defined, and on the other, they become the context within which the concept of *dharma* evolves. For example, the first purpose of praxis-oriented "evaluative" analysis is represented by such rudimentary lists of *dharma*s as the four applications of mindfulness (*smṛtyupasthāna*), the five controlling faculties of practice (*indriya*), and so on. These rudimentary lists are then combined to form grouped sets and hierarchical structures, which together yield a complex, multi-level array of interrelated categories, as, for example, in the case of the 37 limbs of enlightenment.[39] The second purpose of "descriptive" analysis is represented by the set of four fundamental material elements (*mahābhūta*), or the triadic sets of the five aggregates (*skandha*), 12 sense spheres (*āyatana*), and 18 elements (*dhātu*), which became so important in the early stages of Abhidharma exegesis.[40] Each of these three sets represents a different interpretative perspective: the five aggregates are grounded in a fundamental distinction between material form (*rūpa*) and non-material, mental events (*nāma*); the 12 sense spheres and 18 elements reflect the conditions constitutive of sensory experience or perception. These rudi-

mentary sets of *dharmas* of both types are then further elaborated through intricate attribute matrices (*mātṛkā*) consisting of secondary properties such as realm of occurrence, time period, causes, or moral quality. The attribute matrices, arranged in dyads and triads, are then applied systematically to the basic sets of *dharmas*, yielding a secondary level of mutually exclusive categories that form an abstract web of all possible conditions and characteristics exhibited by actually occurring *dharmas*. The individual character of any particular *dharma* can then be specified in accordance with every taxonomic possibility, resulting in a complete assessment of that *dharma's* range of possible occurrences. Certain of these dyads or triads are more purely "descriptive:" for example, those specifying the realm (*dhātu*) in which a *dharma* arises, its character as internal (*ādhyātmika*) or external (*bāhya*), or as conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) or not conditioned (*asaṃskṛta*). Many, however, are "evaluative," representing categories that are soteriologically significant and relevant to praxis, such as moral quality, method of abandonment, or stage of the path: for example, the dyad of *dharmas* tending toward contamination (*sāsrava*) and not tending toward contamination (*anāsrava*), or the triad of those to be abandoned by vision (*darśanaheya*), by cultivation (*bhāvanāheya*), or not to abandoned (*aheya*).[41]

Early efforts to organize the multiplying categories of *dharmas* resulted in comprehensive taxonomic systems that combine both the "evaluative" and "descriptive" purposes.[42] For example, the early comprehensive system of the 22 controlling faculties (*indriya*) subsumes earlier standard sets, which were reordered in large part to reflect these two purposes. It begins with a "descriptive" presentation of the five externally directed, corporeal sense organs (1–5), which are followed by the three controlling faculties (6–8) – namely, femininity, masculinity, and the life-force – that further qualify the final corporeal sense organ of the body. The mental sense organ is listed next (9), and is followed by the five varieties of feelings (10–14) that determine the affective quality of mental events. Here the focus shifts to the "evaluative" or soteriological purpose represented by eight praxis-oriented controlling faculties, culminating in the controlling faculty of one possessed of complete knowledge (*ājñātāvīndriya*), which is tantamount to arhatship or enlightenment.[43]

The later Sarvāstivāda fivefold taxonomy (*pañcavastuka*) is another comprehensive taxonomic system that contains both "evaluative" and "descriptive" categories, but unlike the set of 22 controlling faculties, its arrangement is not soteriologically hierarchical.[44] In-

stead, it attempts to present a complete and systematic listing of all possible *dharmas* classified abstractly by distinctive intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), without regard for the particular causal or temporal conditions of their occurrence. The previous taxonomic systems begin from specific circumstances of praxis, perception, and so forth, and present detailed descriptions of the significant activities or events (*dharma*) that interact cooperatively in those particular circumstances. The fivefold taxonomy, by contrast, takes the perspective of the *dharmas* themselves and sets out a delimited number of abstract genera that are intended to encompass every experienced event or phenomenon, or in other words every possible individual instance of a *dharma*. For example, according to the Sarvāstivāda perspective, every thought (*citta*) event arises in dependence upon a sense organ and an appropriate object-field, but thought occurs in all three realms, in different sentient beings, with differences in moral quality, and so forth, yielding an unlimited number of individual instances or occurrences of thought. Even though their specific character differs, all of these instances can be placed within a single category as "thought." The genera of the fivefold taxonomy include: material form (*rūpa*); thought (*citta*); thought concomitants (*caitta*) or the variety of mental events that occur together with the central mental event of thought; conditioned forces dissociated from thought (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*) or *dharmas* that cannot be classified as either material form or thought; and the unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*).

The historical development of this fivefold taxonomy has yet to be fully studied, but the categories themselves suggest certain general principles of organization and, more importantly, of progression in the interpretation of the term *dharma*.[45] A traditional distinction between the material and the mental, typical of the older system of the five aggregates (*skandha*), is evident in the first three categories of material form, thought, and thought concomitants. But new principles of organization can also be observed that evolved from the doctrinal elaboration and resulting controversies of the early Abhidharma period. First, the distinction within the mental sphere between the two categories of thought (*citta*) and thought concomitants (*caitta*) can be seen as a natural development from the earlier distinction within the five aggregates between perceptual consciousness (*vijñāna*), identified in the new fivefold taxonomy as thought, and the other three non-material aggregates, which are subsumed and further expanded within the single category of thought concomitants. However, this distinction between thought and thought concomitants

also reflects an emphasis upon perception as the central sentient experience and a newly recognized need to isolate thought as an identifiable hub that connects the various activities constituting one sentient being and, thereby, facilitates a distinction between one sentient being and another. Second, the new category of thought concomitants (*caitta*) comprises, according to the later, standard enumeration, 46 *dharma*s that are divided into six sub-groups according to their moral character as virtuous, unvirtuous, and so forth. In this regard, the category of thought concomitants clearly incorporates an "evaluative," soteriological purpose into the otherwise "descriptive" fivefold taxonomy. Third, the category of dissociated forces (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*) includes *dharma*s that were proposed to account for a varied range of experiential or doctrinally necessary events and is, therefore, a miscellany of *dharma*s not unified by any overall integrating principle other than dissociation from both material form and thought.[46] Finally, the last category of the unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) reflects a fundamental distinction between *dharma*s included within the first four categories that are conditioned (*saṃskṛta*), or arise and pass away through causal interaction, and *dharma*s that are not so conditioned and, therefore, neither arise nor pass away.

THE CATEGORY OF THE UNCONDITIONED

Now these final two, the completely new categories of dissociated forces and unconditioned *dharma*s, clearly signal a progression in the notion of what constitutes a *dharma* and an increasingly explicit association of *dharma* with ontology. Why were these particular categories of *dharma*s posited, and what do they reveal about the interpretation of the character of a *dharma*? The answer to the first question is different in the case of each particular *dharma*, but in general terms the new categories comprise commonly experienced events or soteriologically necessary circumstances that were excluded from the existing categories. Newly evolved doctrinal constraints rendered the traditional categories insufficient and resulted in a growing and potentially unlimited number of mutually exclusive *dharma*-categories.[47] In the new, more rigorous and comprehensive *dharma* analysis each newly acknowledged experience, phenomenon, or occurrence demanded a new and separate *dharma*-category, each of which was then identified by a distinctive function. Analysis itself became the dominant concern, acquiring an abstract, self-referential

character that involved the recombination of existing categories into larger relational systems. The previous schemata were distilled and rationalized producing not only new individual categories and abstract principles of organization, but also transformed and often competing notions of the character and function of the component *dharmas*.

And what does the fivefold taxonomy reveal about the evolving Sarvāstivāda notion of what constitutes a *dharma?* As noted previously, several scholars have suggested a dynamic conception of *dharmas* within Buddhism, not as static substances, but as properties or activities that separate and distinguish, and thereby manifest and uphold the inherent regularity of all experience. From this perspective, *dharmas* are distinct, but not unrelated to one another; they represent causally significant points within the complex web of experienced activities, but points that can only be determined relationally and that can only be defined dynamically. These relational distinctions that define *dharmas* are not considered arbitrary, but rather are "true" or express "the way things really are" in the sense that they articulate the fundamental causal structures implicit within all experience.[48]

This dynamic interpretation of *dharmas* fits well with a concept of experience as a mass of impermanent, mutually conditioning events, a concept that, in one form or another, typifies virtually all of early Indian Buddhism. But the category of the unconditioned (*asaṃskṛta*) within the fivefold taxonomy asserts the possibility of permanent (*nitya*) *dharmas*, in contrast to all other *dharmas* that are impermanent (*anitya*).[49] More problematic, as the harsh and protracted criticism by Buddhist opponents readily demonstrates, is the distinctive Sarvāstivāda model that all *dharmas*, permanent and impermanent alike, are defined by a fixed, intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) and exist as real entities (*dravyatas*), whether past, present, or future. Is the category of the unconditioned inconsistent with a conception of *dharmas* as dynamic properties, and if so, in what sense can unconditioned factors be considered *dharmas?* And does the distinctive Sarvāstivāda model of intrinsic nature and existence as real entities entail a static view of all *dharmas* as permanent substances?[50]

Characterizations of the mutually exclusive categories of conditioned and unconditioned *dharmas* in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* provide some tentative answers to these questions.[51] Specifically, conditioned *dharmas* constitute the traditional categories of the five aggregates, which, as conditioned (*saṃskṛta*) themselves, also function as con-

ditions in the arising of other *dharma*s and are, therefore, referred to as forces (*saṃskāra*).[52] They are impermanent, abiding no longer than a moment, and can be qualified in terms of the three time periods of past, present, and future. Hence, they are subject to modification (*vipariṇāma*),[53] which the **Mahāvibhāṣā* explains not as the manifestation and disappearance of a previously hidden and permanently abiding essential character,[54] but as change consisting in arising and passing away that is applied to the *dharma* itself.[55] Conditioned *dharma*s arise through the cooperative efficacy of a specific generative cause and a collocation of other requisite causes and conditions; and once arisen, they themselves act as generative causes or as conditions assisting in the arising of other conditioned *dharma*s. In the mature Sarvāstivāda model, a *dharma*'s status as conditioned is marked by four conditioning characteristics (*saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*) that function to enable the exertion of that *dharma*'s activity.[56] Unconditioned *dharma*s include space (*ākāśa*) and the two states of cessation resulting from consideration (*pratisaṃkhyānirodha*) and not resulting from consideration (*apratisaṃkhyānirodha*). In contrast to conditioned *dharma*s, these unconditioned *dharma*s are free from arising and passing away or modification and hence abide permanently. They lack a generative cause or dependence upon a collocation of causes and conditions, as well any activity that generates its own effect. They are excluded from both the five aggregates and the three time periods, and are exempt from the four conditioning characteristics.[57]

If, as suggested above, *dharma*s refer to events or circumstances, if *dharma*s are dynamic properties that "do" something, what then do unconditioned *dharma*s "do?" Definitions offered for each of the unconditioned *dharma*s suggest that they do indeed have a function, and, as in the case of other impermanent, conditioned *dharma*s, this function is the basis that determines their distinctive character and hence both their status as *dharma*s and their existence. The discussion of the unconditioned *dharma* space (*ākāśa*) in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* provides an excellent example of the argumentation employed.[58] First, the text contends that traditional sources do not clearly distinguish space as an unconditioned *dharma* from space as a conditioned, material element (*ākāśadhātu*). Scriptural passages using the simple term "space" (*ākāśa*) actually describe space as a material element, and the *Prakaraṇapāda* also uses the "gross" characteristics of space as a material element to indicate the "subtle" unconditioned *dharma* space.[59] The **Mahāvibhāṣā* next raises the question of how,

especially given its subtlety, space can be determined to exist.[60] The text first offers the view of Vasumitra who claims that its existence can be known both through scriptural authority, namely, through references to space by the Buddha, as well as through one's direct experience of its distinctive function.[61] Several explanations of this function are given, all of which utilize the same technique of *prasaṅga*, or a *reductio*-type of reasoning whereby each function must be acknowledged in order to avoid an untoward consequence. For example, "if there were no space, objects would not have a place to occur; but since there is a place for various objects, one knows that space exists."[62] Accordingly, something that has the distinctive function of not obstructing must be inferred from the observation of the coming and going, the assemblage and dispersion, and the ready occurrence of material objects that have resistance and otherwise would obstruct one another. As Vasumitra concludes, "since one observes that there are places without obstruction, one knows that space definitely exists as a real entity (*dravyatas*), because it is precisely space that has this distinctive function of non-obstruction as its characteristic."[63] In other words, the observed occurrence of phenomena must have a causal basis, and we can, therefore, assume that its basis, in this case space, exists. Vasumitra's explanation is followed by the opposing opinion of Bhadanta who claims that space cannot be known and, therefore, exists merely as a provisional designation (*prajñaptitas*).[64] The arbiter of the **Mahāvibhāṣā* finally declares, "it is not the case that [space] is not known, that is to say, that it does not exist; [one can conclude that] space exists as a real entity on the basis of the previously cited scriptural passages and reasoned arguments".[65]

The next section in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* even more clearly links function to existence in clarifying precisely what it is that space "does." It states, "if it is so [that space exists], what activity (作用 **kāritra*) does space have? Space is unconditioned and lacks any generative activity to produce an effect. However, it does function as the sovereign condition (*adhipatipratyaya*), that is, as a non-obstructing condition with regard to the various material elements of space."[66] The **Mahāvibhāṣā* then delineates a series of sovereign conditions, beginning with this non-obstructing function of space, proceeding through the material elements of space, the four fundamental material elements, the secondary material elements, and ending with thought and thought concomitants. The text concludes, "if there were no space, this series of causes and conditions pro-

ceeding in this way would not be established. This fault must be avoided. Therefore, space actually exists with intrinsic form (體相 **svarūpa*), and one should not deny it as nonexistent."[67] Elsewhere the **Mahāvibhāṣā* specifies that unconditioned *dharmas* function not only as sovereign conditions (*adhipatipratyaya*), but also as comprehensive non-obstructing causes (*kāraṇahetu*) and as object-support conditions (*ālambanapratyaya*).[68] Their function as comprehensive non-obstructing causes is identical to their function as sovereign conditions: that is, as in the case of all *dharmas*, unconditioned *dharmas* also function not to obstruct the arising of *dharmas* other than themselves. And in this function as non-obstructing causes, unconditioned *dharmas* do not exert any generative causal efficacy: that is to say, they are not active in producing an effect. As object-support conditions, unconditioned *dharmas* function as objects of mental perceptual consciousness, but here also they do not function as the generative causes for its arising. Hence, unconditioned *dharmas* are said to have no cause, since they do not arise, and no effect, since they do not function as generative causes in producing their own effect.[69] Nevertheless, even though unconditioned *dharmas* lack generative activity, they do have a function, and this functioning, as in the case of conditioned *dharmas*, makes known their characteristic nature and mandates their existence as distinct *dharmas*.

SVABHĀVA AND THE METHOD OF INCLUSION

In the framework of the distinctive Sarvāstivāda model, a dynamic conception of *dharmas* and their exertion of a transient, generative activity appear to harmonize well with the common Buddhist notion of impermanent, conditioned *dharmas*. But what of the assertion that all conditioned *dharmas* are defined by a fixed, intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) and exist as real entities (*dravyatas*), whether past, present, or future? Does this not contradict the prior affirmation of impermanence and entail a static view of *dharmas* as permanent substances? To answer this question, we must examine more closely how the term *dharma* was defined and what was implied by the terms *svabhāva* and *dravya* through which *dharmas* were specified.

Neither the early Sarvāstivāda, canonical Abhidharma texts nor the *vibhāṣā* compendia contain an abstract definition of *dharma* as such. A definition is found, however, in Upaśānta's and Dharmatrāta's commentaries on the **Abhidharmahṛdaya*, and is transmitted in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and subsequent texts: that is,

"*dharma* means 'upholding,' [namely], upholding intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*)."[70] Although lacking an overt abstract definition, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* uses similar terminology in several passages, implying a concept of *dharma* comparable to that suggested by these definitions. For example, in explaining why one meaning of the term "root" (*mūla*) is intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), it states "intrinsic nature is able to uphold it own identity (自體 **ātmabhāva*) and not lose it; therefore, it is considered a 'root.' As in the case of unconditioned [*dharmas*] that are able to uphold their own identity and are, therefore, considered to be "roots", [here] also there is no error."[71] And elsewhere, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* interprets a grammatical (*śābdika*) explanation of the term "element" (*dhātu*), as upholding: "[the statement,] 'it is referred to as "element" because it is upholding (*saṃdhāraṇa*),' means these various elements uphold intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*)."[72]

One final passage from the **Mahāvibhāṣā* is instructive in pointing to the primary context within which *dharmas* were interpreted in these early Abhidharma texts and from which the concept of *svabhāva* naturally developed: namely, the context of categorization, where invariable criteria are demanded as the basis for unambiguous classification. This passage discusses the topic of "inclusion" (*saṃgraha*)[73] and the process by which the inclusion of *dharmas* within a specific group or category is to be applied. Here, the text first cites a standard listing of 16 categories of defilements, ranging from the three fetters (*saṃyojana*) through the 98 contaminants (*anuśaya*),[74] and inquires which of the 98 contaminants are to be included within each of the other categories.[75] The **Mahāvibhāṣā* explains that this topic is raised in order to counter the view of the Vibhajyavādins concerning the method of inclusion: namely, that "*dharmas* are included on the basis of other nature (*parabhāva*), and not on the basis of intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*)."[76] To support their view, the Vibhajyavādins appeal to both scriptural authority and common usage in which "that which includes" and "that which is included" are clearly distinct from one another, as in the case of a householder who states "I possess land, domestic animals," and so forth. In view of such examples, the Vibhajyavādins claim that inclusion is based upon other-nature.[77] The **Mahāvibhāṣā* responds that these commonplace examples involve inclusion merely in a conventional sense, which is indeed based upon other-nature and varies in accordance with both time and circumstances. However, the categories of distinct *dharmas* as utilized in Abhidharma analysis are

established through inclusion in the absolute sense (*pāramārthika*), which is applied only on the basis of intrinsic nature and is free of any such contingencies. In other words, a *dharma*'s own identity (自體 **ātmabhāva*) is not contingent upon conditions and is invariable.[78] As the **Mahāvibhāṣā* concludes, "own identity" or "intrinsic nature" serves as the basis of absolute inclusion because this intrinsic nature exists, is a real entity, and can be apprehended; it is not different, not other, not separated, not apart, and is never void; it is not the case that it has not existed, does not exist, or will not exist; it neither increases nor decreases. Inclusion by intrinsic nature does not involve one thing grasping another, as in the case of grabbing food with the hand or pinching cloth with the fingers. Instead, *dharmas* each uphold their own identity and prevent it from disintegrating; the term "inclusion" is established on the basis of this sense of "upholding."[79]

This method of inclusion, integral to any taxonomic practice, is implicit within Abhidharma categorization in all periods. However, even though the earliest canonical Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts classify specific *dharmas* according to a method of simple inclusion, they do not utilize the intricate matrices typical of the *vibhāṣā* compendia, nor do they explicitly consider the meaning of "inclusion," its rationale, and its implications for the nature of the *dharmas* so classified, as evident in the controversy concerning intrinsic nature and other-nature outlined above.[80] The early method of simple inclusion is expanded in the canonical texts of the middle period such as the *Prakaraṇapāda*, *Vijñānakāya*, and the *Jñānaprasthāna*, which relate entire categories rather than simply classifying individual *dharmas*, but which still do not explicitly discuss the rationale for the method of inclusion in terms of a fundamental contrast between intrinsic nature and other-nature.

The earliest extant Abhidharma text to apply the method of inclusion through exhaustive and intricate matrices of categories and to refer to its basis in the intrinsic or other-nature of *dharmas* is the **Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra*.[81] Inclusion is treated in a separate section that begins with a description of the method of inclusion, clearly citing intrinsic nature and other-nature as the criteria by which it is determined.[82] The text then offers a matrix of over 200 attribute categories structured in contrasting, affirmative and negative dyads that reflect the fundamental distinction between intrinsic nature and other nature. Finally, it indicates in general terms the *dharmas* within each category. The next section applies the method of inclusion, relating each of the over 200 dyads of the basic matrix to the three

categories of the aggregates, elements, and sense spheres by asking the same set of formulaic questions. For example, "the visual sense sphere (*cakṣurāyatana*) *dharma* is included in how many aggregates, elements, and sense spheres? About what *dharma*s is this question asked? The question is asked about the *dharma* of the visual sense sphere, excluding other *dharma*s. What other *dharma*s are excluded? [The next category, namely, those] *dharma*s that are not the visual sense sphere, [is excluded]."[83] Finally, this set of formulaic questions is posed once again, but now in terms of the negative alternative of "non-inclusion," again applied to each of the over 200 dyads in the basic matrix.

This section on inclusion in the **Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra*, with its highly formulaic, catechetical structure, would appear to tell us very little about the specific character or existence of the individual sets of *dharma*s, but that in itself is telling, suggesting that in this early period of Abhidharma exegesis the method of inclusion and its application were at least as important as any descriptive information about *dharma*s that they might yield. And the increasing abstraction in taxonomic practice, indicated by the formulaic systematization of the method of inclusion in the **Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* undoubtedly also reflects a concomitant abstraction in the basic notion of what constitutes a *dharma*. In this regard, it is significant to note that the term *svabhāva* in the distinctive sense of the intrinsic nature of a category or of an individual *dharma*[84] is not used in the earliest Sarvāstivāda canonical Abhidharma texts;[85] it appears only in texts from the period of the early *vibhāṣā* compendia onward, that is, concurrent with the systematic development of the analytical method of categorization by inclusion. It is then plausible to infer that this sense of *svabhāva* as intrinsic nature, so important in later Sarvāstivāda exegesis for the interpretation of the character of *dharma*s *per se*, first emerged through its function as the criterion determining categories of *dharma*s, specifically in the context of inclusion.

The probable origin of the distinctive sense of the term *svabhāva* within the context of taxonomy, that is, within the method of inclusion, also elucidates its application to *dharma*s in mature Sarvāstivāda usage. As in the case of categories that are nothing other than the *svabhāva* that demarcates them, so also *dharma*s should not be considered to possess a separately existing intrinsic nature, but are constituted by the very *svabhāva* that defines them. In this sense, each *dharma* so defined is "determined" (*pariniṣpanna*) by its intrinsic nature.[86] The composite objects of ordinary experience

are, by contrast, not determined; that is to say, as complex entities that depend for their existence upon the constituents of which they are made, their character is relative and must be assessed differently depending upon the circumstances.[87] "Determination" implies two further features of *dharmas*, both of which flow naturally from the function of *svabhāva* in the context of categorization.[88] First, just as categories in a well-structured taxonomic schema are distinct and not subject to fluctuation, so also *dharmas*, as "determined," are clearly and unalterably discriminated; they are uniquely individualized and as such are not subject to confusion with other *dharmas*.[89] This feature of *dharmas* is highlighted in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* in a lengthy discussion of the character of *nirvāṇa*. Here, the text first counters the view of the Vātsīputrīyas who claim that *nirvāṇa* in its intrinsic nature has three different characteristics depending upon its method of acquisition.[90] The **Mahāvibhāṣā* responds: "Why should *nirvāṇa* have three characteristics simply because it is acquired through three different types of possession? One *dharma* should not have a threefold intrinsic form (體相 **svarūpa*) as its [intrinsic] nature."[91] And in its final comments, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* explicitly connects intrinsic nature, determination, and the absence of confusion among *dharmas*: "If the single [*dharma* of] *nirvāṇa* were subject to modification in accordance with its method of acquisition, then no *dharmas* would be determined. If [*dharmas*] were not determined, there would be confusion [among them]. If there were confusion [among *dharmas*], one should not designate characteristics of [intrinsic] nature (性相) such as permanent or impermanent as determined.[92] . . . Because *nirvāṇa* is always of [a single nature, that is, specifically] of one neither in training nor beyond training (*naivaśaikṣanāśaikṣa*), *dharmas* are determined and are without confusion; they are always established in their intrinsic nature and do not abandon their intrinsic nature."[93]

As this passage demonstrates, to be a *dharma* is to be determined by a distinctive intrinsic nature, which is never abandoned. And, as in the case of categories, it is only through clear discrimination on the basis of intrinsic nature that confusion among *dharmas* can be avoided. This leads to the second feature of *dharmas* implied by their "determination:" that is, determination by intrinsic nature undergoes no variation or modification, and hence, *dharmas*, which are in effect types or categories of intrinsic nature, are established as stable and immutable. In this regard, Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts speak of *dharmas* as "always established as their intrinsic nature," with the inevitable implication that they always exist as intrinsic nature. For

example, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* claims that "all *dharmas* already have intrinsic nature, because from the beginning each [*dharma*] is established in [its] own particular inherent characteristic;"[94] that is to say, "every *dharma* is established in its intrinsic nature [or identity], its own self, its own form, its own characteristic, its own part, and its own original nature."[95] Hence, *dharmas* as *svabhāvas* or as abstract categories are invariable and denote an atemporal, that is, inalterable existence.

The original taxonomic function of *svabhāva* also helps to clarify an ambiguity in the application of the term *svabhāva* to both individual *dharmas* and to categorial groups *of dharmas* as a whole. In its discussion of both individual *dharmas* and categorial groups, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* follows a regular pattern, first identifying the intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) of the individual or group by means of a formulaic characterization. For example, in the discussion of the three time periods, it states: "What do the three time periods, [understood] in this way, take as [their] intrinsic nature? They take all conditioned *dharmas* as [their] intrinsic nature. As in the case of intrinsic nature, so also the self, form, identity, characteristic, part, and original nature [of the three time periods] should be understood. The intrinsic nature [of the three time periods] has already been explained."[96] Here the term *svabhāva* is used in reference to the three time periods, even though for the Sarvāstivādins the time periods do not constitute independent *dharmas* determined by intrinsic nature, but are nothing other than the past, present, and future forces (*saṃskāra*) of which they consist.[97] Hence, the term *svabhāva*, as in the case of the three time periods, cannot be assumed to connote the real existence of an individual *dharma*. If, however, the term *svabhāva* is understood to signify the defining property of an abstract category, it can then be applied without contradiction to either categorial groups as a whole or to their individual constituents. Now given the **Mahāvibhāṣā*'s routine application of this formulaic characterization in terms of intrinsic nature to both individual, phenomenal events recognized as discrete, independent *dharmas* and to entire categorial groups of *dharmas*,[98] it seems plausible that the original function of *svabhāva* was to identify the specific property that enables the discrimination of categorial-types, whether on the level of individuals or groupings, and not to signify that the category as a whole exists as a single, independent *dharma*.

Despite its regular use of the term *svabhāva* to refer to both categorial groups and individual *dharmas*, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* also evinces an awareness of certain contradictions to which this ambiguity in

usage might lead. In a discussion of the implications of the various meanings of the term "aggregate," or *skandha*, as a heap (*rāśi*), a bundle, an assemblage, or as a collection,[99] the **Mahāvibhāṣā* notes that just as the term "army" can be applied to a collection of discrete individuals without fusing the individuals into one person, so also the single name "material form aggregate" (*rūpaskandha*), can be meaningfully applied to a collection of instances of material form in the past, present, and future without merging their intrinsic natures into one. As the text states, "even though [the various instances of material form] are distinct from one another, because they are alike [in nature], a unified material form aggregate can be established."[100] Can the name "material form aggregate" also then be applied to the individual atoms (*paramāṇu*) that come together to constitute each given instance of material form? The **Mahāvibhāṣā* offers three conflicting answers. First, since the material form aggregate can only be established as an aggregation of many atoms, one individual atom alone cannot be referred to as a "material form aggregate." Second, since each and every individual atom has the characteristic of a material form aggregate, separate atoms can indeed be established as the material form aggregate. Otherwise, it would not be possible to refer to a collection of individual atoms as a whole as the "material form aggregate." The third response, that of the Abhidharma masters, suggests that ambiguity in the application of the name "material form aggregate" results from a difference in perspective. When viewed from the perspective of a conventional aggregate or an aggregate as a provisional designation, atoms should be seen as constituting only one portion of the aggregates, sense spheres, or elements. However, when viewed from the perspective of Abhidharma analysis in which an aggregate is marked by a distinctive intrinsic nature, each atom can indeed be referred to as an aggregate, sense sphere, or element.[101] The **Mahāvibhāṣā* uses the example of a person taking one kernel from a pile of grain: when viewed from the perspective of the pile of grain, one would say "I am taking one kernel from the pile of grain," but when not viewed from the perspective of the pile, one would say "I am taking grain."[102]

Ambiguous application of the term *svabhāva* continued in the later Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts. An original taxonomic function is still evident in several passages, for example, in a discussion of the elements (*dhātu*), where the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* glosses "kinds" (*jāti*) with *svabhāva*.[103] And in its discussion of inclusion, the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* cites the traditional classification of the visual sense

organ controlling faculty (*cakṣurindriya*) within the material form aggregate, the visual sense sphere, and the visual element, by virtue of the fact that the visual sense organ controlling faculty has the same intrinsic nature as these categories (*tatsvabhāvāt*).[104] In presenting the previously cited argument from the **Mahāvibhāṣā* concerning the application of the term "aggregate," the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* raises the issue of whether the aggregates exist as real entities (*dravyatas*) or as provisional designations (*prajñaptitas*).[105] This suggests that for later Abhidharma texts the ambiguous application of intrinsic nature to categorial groups or to individual *dharmas* necessarily entailed addressing the problem of how the thing so characterized exists. In other words, intrinsic nature no longer functioned merely as a demarcating property that determines identity, but had connotations of existence, specifically the real and individual existence of the thing demarcated.

In these applications of intrinsic nature to both individual *dharmas* and to categorial groups, the traditional method of inclusion results in multiple levels, each of which is distinguished by a distinct intrinsic nature. A given *dharma*, such as the visual sense organ, can then be characterized by multiple intrinsic natures depending upon the categories within which it is included.[106] Once again, this ambiguity in application would not constitute a problem so long as *svabhāva* is understood primarily as indicating the criterion by which separate categories are discriminated. But if *svabhāva* also connotes existence as a unique, individual *dharma*, two problems result: first, its application to larger categorial groups would be unjustified since clearly such large categorial groups do not exist as single, individual *dharmas*; and second, a single *dharma* characterized by multiple *svabhāvas* should, in fact, exist as multiple *dharmas*.

SVABHĀVA IN RELATION TO *BHĀVA*

Indeed, one can convincingly argue that taxonomy always rests upon ontology[107] and that connotations of existence noted in the previous characterizations of *dharmas* and arguments from the **Mahāvibhāṣā* had always been present in the term *svabhāva*. To clarify further the original connotations of *svabhāva*, one can profitably turn to an examination of the evolution and use of the term *bhāva*, with which it is etymologically and functionally related. However, at the outset it must be acknowledged that the uncertainty of the Indic equivalents of terms used in the Chinese translations of early Sarvāstivāda

Abhidharma texts makes tracing the early sense of *bhāva* in these materials extremely difficult.[108] Within Pāli Abhidhamma texts, *bhāva* is used almost exclusively in compound-final position usually with the sense of "state of being X."[109] However, in one passage in the *Kathāvatthu*, within the section on "Everything Exists" (*sabbam atthi*), its sense is uncertain. This passage begins with a question raised by the text proponent who asks whether in the case of, for example, present material form, "present" (*paccuppanna*) and "material form" (*rūpa*) are one and the same with no distinction between them.[110] The opponent, who like the Sarvāstivādins supports the existence of past, present, and future *dharmas*, assents that they are the same. The text proponent then inquires: "[Text Proponent:] Does present material form that is ceasing abandon its state of being present (*paccuppannabhāva*)? [Opponent:] Yes. [Text Proponent:] Does it abandon its state of being material form (*rūpabhāva*)? [Opponent:] That is not to be said."[111] To explain his negative response, the opponent compares "present material form" to a white cloth, which when dyed abandons its state of being white (*odātabhāva*), but not its state of being a cloth (*vatthabhāva*). Similarly, the opponent would suggest, it is possible for a present instance of material form to abandon its state as "present," without abandoning its state as "material form."

Now the specific meaning of *bhāva* in this passage is not clear, since the context could support an abstract sense as "state" or "nature," or an ontological sense as "exists as" or "mode of existence," or possibly both. The surrounding argument does not allow us to decide among these three options, nor is it even certain that the text proponent and opponent understand *bhāva* in the same way. The text proponent's initial question concerning the lack of distinction between the "present" and "material form" itself suggests an understanding of *bhāva* as denoting something more akin to "nature" or even possibly "intrinsic nature." Accordingly, it would be impossible for a given *dharma* to abandon its "nature" as present, and yet concurrently retain its "nature" as material form. As the text states: "[Text Proponent:] Is it the case that material form does not abandon its state of being material form (*rūpabhāva*)? [Opponent:] Yes. [Text Proponent:] Is material form a *dharma* that is permanent, stable, eternal, and not subject to modification? [Opponent:] That is not to be said ... [Text Proponent:] If material form is impermanent, unstable, non-eternal, and subject to modification, one should certainly not say that "material form does not abandon its state of being

material form."[112] As these questions indicate, the text proponent assumes that if material form does not abandon its *bhāva* as material form, it must be permanent; hence, once again, *bhāva* for the text proponent would here also apparently convey the sense of unchanging "nature." For the opponent to disagree and to maintain that material form is not permanent, he must understand *bhāva* differently. Hence, the opponent seems to understand *bhāva*, at least when used in reference to the temporal qualifications of past, present, and future, in the sense of "mode of existence." And so in this passage, the term *bhāva* would appear to be used ambiguously: that is to say, when used in conjunction with "material form" to signify a *dharma*'s defining character, *bhāva* appears to convey a more abstract sense of "nature," but when used in conjunction with the time periods, *bhāva* appears to signify "mode of existence."

The ambiguity in the sense of the term *bhāva* apparent in this section of the *Kathāvatthu* is also encountered in early Sarvāstivāda texts. Of particular interest here are passages in the *Saṅgītiparyāya* that describe *dharmas* in relation to the three time periods. For example, in discussing the material form aggregate (*rūpaskandha*), it begins with the following definition: "What is the material form aggregate? Whatever material form, whether past, future, present, internal, external, gross, subtle, inferior, superior, distant, or close, all [varieties of material form] in this way are put together in a single group, which is referred to as the material form aggregate."[113] The phrase "whether past, future, or present" is glossed with three parallel series of adjectives, which, in the case of the past, concludes with the phrase "pastness (過去性 **atītatva*), the state of being past (過去類**atītabhāva*), and being included within the past time period (過去世攝 **atītasaṃgrahīta*)."[114] In interpreting this passage, Junshō KATŌ suggests that the term *bhāva* conveys the sense of existence, that is to say, "the existent *dharma* of past material form" or "existing as past material form," and so forth. On the basis of such uses of the term *bhāva* in the *Saṅgītiparyāya*, KATŌ proposes that early Sarvāstivāda texts viewed past, present, and future *dharmas* as distinct, attributing to each a separate existence (*bhāva*).[115] For any given *dharma* such as material form, one can then speak of three separate *bhāvas* or *dharmas* of past, present, and future, all of which, in view of their designation as *bhāvas*, exist. Thus, the perspective of the early texts in using the term *bhāva* is one of *dharmas* existing in different modes such as internal, external, gross, subtle, and so forth, and also of course as past, present and future.

This interpretation of *bhāva* in the sense of "mode of existence" is corroborated by two passages from an early (c. 1st cent. CE) Gāndhārī Abhidharma manuscript where a Sarvāstivādin opponent uses *bhāva* (Gāndhārī = G *bhava*) in the plural and asserts that one *dharma* exists through or by means of various G *bhavas*: "material form exists through G *bhava* (plural), but there are not three separate [*dharmas* of] material form."[116] Since a single *dharma* is defined by one intrinsic nature, this admission of multiple *bhāvas* and the contrast between *bhāva* and material form argues that the Sarvāstivādin opponent admitted at least some kind of distinction between *bhāva* and the *dharma* as characterized by intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*).

At the comparatively early date represented by the *Kathāvatthu*, the early canonical Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts, and the fragmentary Gāndhārī manuscript, the combined textual evidence indicates that *bhāva* conveyed both an abstract sense as "nature" and an ontological sense as "mode of existence."[117] The term *svabhāva*, grounded logically and etymologically in the term *bhāva*, might then also be expected to carry this dual sense. In the final stage of Sarvāstivāda doctrinal investigations, that is, in Saṅghabhadra's **Nyāyanusāra*, *bhāva* acquired a meaning as a *dharma*'s variable "mode of existence" clearly demarcated from that of *svabhāva*, which indicates "intrinsic nature."[118] Thus, in these early accounts, we find preserved the initial stages in Sarvāstivāda theory in which the new, more technical sense of *bhāva* was beginning to develop, but the clear distinction between *bhāva* and *svabhāva* typical of the later Sarvāstivāda materials had not yet solidified. These accounts provide us with traces of the complex process through which the two terms, *bhāva* and *svabhāva*, originally used virtually synonymously, were gradually distinguished from one another: the distinctive Sarvāstivāda sense of "intrinsic nature" became centered on the term *svabhāva*, while *bhāva* acquired a new, technical sense as a *dharma*'s changing "mode of existence."

DRAVYA AS THE MARKER OF REAL EXISTENCE

This ambiguity in the term *svabhāva* then served as the bridge for a transition in the Sarvāstivāda treatment of *dharma*, from a categorial focus directed toward demarcating experientially or soteriologically significant categories to an ontological concentration on the specific character and existence of the *dharmas* constituting each category. This transition is clearly observed in the middle period of Sarvāstivāda

literature represented by the *vibhāṣā* compendia and contemporaneous texts and is, at least in part, a natural outgrowth of their function as exegetical commentaries. In the texts of this middle period, traditional categories and forms of presentation are preserved, but are radically reorganized and refined in accordance with new analytical parameters. Doctrinal issues are situated in a polemical context in which a range of alternative opinions are cited and evaluated and, where possible, an authoritative position is determined. The traditional technique of formulaically structured taxonomies, although still playing a role within these issue-oriented discussions, gives way as the primary organizational method to topically arranged investigations that exhibit a more thematically coherent structure. And as a part of this shift in exegetical focus and technique, the explicit emphasis upon categorization *per se* recedes in importance as the focus shifts to clarifying the character and eventually the ontological status of individual *dharma*s. Accordingly, the term *svabhāva* acquires the dominant sense of the "intrinsic nature" specifying individual *dharma*s, as evident in the definition of *dharma* noted above. And determining individual *dharma*s through unique intrinsic nature also entails affirming their existence, as a natural function both of the etymological sense of the term *svabhāva* and of the role of *dharma*s as the fundamental constituents of experience. This then leads to the prominence of a new term that expressed this ontological focus: namely, *dravya*.

The issue of the existence of *dharma*s is most often raised in the *vibhāṣā* compendia in polemical contexts where the ontological status of individual *dharma*s is contested, but in a few passages existence is discussed in the abstract. The **Mahāvibhāṣā* contains at least four separate abstract typologies of existence, indicating considerable variety in its analysis of existence even at this comparatively early stage.[119] More importantly, however, the very presence of these typologies demonstrates that existence was not considered to be uniform; experienced objects do not simply exist or not exist, but rather can exist in different ways. The typologies present three major types of existence: real existence (*dravya*), as in the case of the category of aggregates or individual *dharma*s that are established in intrinsic nature; provisional existence (*prajñapti*), as in the case of the composite objects of ordinary experience; and relative existence (**āpekṣika*), as in the case of the mutual dependence of long and short or contingencies of time and place. *Dharma*s that are determined by intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) exist as real entities (*dravyatas*), in con-

trast to composite objects that lack such a unique, defining intrinsic nature. Such composite objects exist only provisionally (*prajñaptitas*) in dependence upon their constitutive fundamental *dharma*s. Hence, the terms *dravya* and *prajñapti* connote existence, and although they depend for their application upon the presence or absence of a unique intrinsic nature, they do not, in themselves, identify the specific character of a *dharma* or composite object. This specification of character can occur only through analytical discrimination that determines intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) in the case of individual *dharma*s, or that identifies the individual *dharma*s upon which composite objects or relative states depend.

This new concern with the character and existence of individual *dharma*s led to a wholesale reappraisal of traditional categories of *dharma*s, eventually resulting in their refinement according to ontological criteria that coincided with the now explicit ontological meaning of *svabhāva* expressed through the term *dravya*. This process of refinement is evident in the issue of whether, in the case of any given set of categories, the number of *dharma*s is equivalent to the number of *dravya*s.[120] For example, in considering the 18 elements (*dhātu*), the **Mahāvibhāṣā* notes that even though the elements are distinct as names or *dharma*-categories, as *dravya*, there are only either 17 or 12.[121] Since the single mental sense organ (*manodhātu*) encompasses all six types of perceptual consciousness (*vijñāna*), from the standpoint of their existence as real entities (*dravyatas*), one or the other should be omitted. This would result in either 12 elements, if the six types of perceptual consciousness were omitted, or 17, if the mental organ were omitted.[122]

The changing interpretation of the term *svabhāva* in this new explicitly ontological context is even more clearly indicated in a second passage concerning the 22 controlling faculties (*indriya*).[123] The **Mahāvibhāṣā* first offers the view that the 22 traditional categories of controlling faculties should be reduced to 17 *dravya*s, but then records two other dissenting views. First, the master Dharmatrāta further reduces the 17 to 14. He identifies two more of the controlling faculties with others, and rejects a third, vitality (*jīvitendriya*), because he denies the real existence (*dravyatas*) of the entire category of *dharma*s to which it belongs: namely, the forces dissociated from thought (*cittaviprayuktasaṃskāra*). Second, the master Buddhadeva adopts an even more radical position, suggesting the reduction of the 22 categories to only one *dravya*, namely, the mental controlling faculty (*manaindriya*), since, for him, conditioned

dharmas exhibit only two varieties of intrinsic nature: material form consisting of the fundamental material elements (*mahābhūta*), and thought (*citta*).[124]

As noted previously, both the 18 elements and the 22 controlling faculties are distinguished as separate categories by intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), but as these passages demonstrate, not all categories are considered to exist as discrete real entities (*dravya*). If *svabhāva* were equivalent to *dravya*, such differences in the number of *svabhāva* and *dravya* would be impossible. However, such differences can be explained if we keep in mind the ambiguity especially in the early usage of the term *svabhāva* and its greater specificity after the introduction of the notion of *dravya*. In the earliest period, *svabhāva* denotes the categorial-type or nature by which groups or individual *dharmas* are classified, but as the focus of Abhidharma exegesis shifts to the character of individual *dharmas* and their existence, *svabhāva* becomes a special marker for uniquely determined, individual *dharmas*. *Dravya*, by contrast, is always associated with ontology and denotes the discrete and actual existence of recognized *dharmas*. Even when both terms are in frequent use from the *vibhāṣā* compendia onward, *svabhāva* is still used when the character or nature of *dharmas* is the issue, and *dravya*, when existence is the issue. However, despite this difference in their primary denotation as "nature" or "real existence," the terms are nonetheless closely intertwined, since those things that actually exist, namely, *dharmas*, are recognized or determined on the basis of their intrinsic nature.

And how is such existence as *dravya* established? Existence is, as we have seen, connected with functioning: a *dharma*'s intrinsic nature is defined in terms of the distinctive function that it performs, and it is through the observation of a *dharma*'s distinctive function that we know that it exists. Now such functioning, from the earliest period of Abhidharma exegesis onward, is understood preeminently as causal functioning.[125] This connection between existence and specifically causal functioning is noted repeatedly in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, in particular, in arguments with those such as the Darṣṭāntikas, who deny that causes or conditions must exist as real entities. In the formulaic presentation of passages from its root text, the *Jñānaprasthāna*, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* often begins: "[this discussion is presented] in order to counter the deluded belief concerning *dharmas* [functioning as] causes and conditions – [namely, that *dharmas*] in the state of being causes and conditions do not exist as real entities – and to make it clear that *dharmas* [functioning as] causes and conditions exist as real entities

with intrinsic nature."[126] And if causes and conditions were permitted to lack intrinsic nature and existence as real entities, the same would be true of all *dharma*s, since all possible *dharma*s are included within the groups of six causes and four conditions.[127]

Now, a given *dharma* is marked by a distinctive function in accordance with its intrinsic nature, and just as it is always determined by its intrinsic nature, whether past, present, or future, so also it is always marked by its distinctive function, even if that function is not actually being performed.[128] A *dharma* is not, however, limited to a single mode of distinctive, causal functioning, but can function in various ways, any of which implies its existence.[129] For example, all *dharma*s function as comprehensive non-obstructing causes (*kāraṇahetu*) or as sovereign conditions (*adhipatipratyaya*) in not obstructing the arising of other *dharma*s. *Dharma*s also function as homogeneous causes (*sabhāgahetu*) in the arising of *dharma*s of the same type and as the object-support condition (*ālambanapratyaya*) for appropriate varieties of perceptual consciousness. And depending upon its particular character as mental, material, unvirtuous, or *karmic*, a given *dharma* can also function as a number of other types of causes or conditions.

Moreover, for the Sarvāstivādins, a *dharma*'s possible modes of functioning are not limited to the present moment. All *dharma*s can function as non-obstructing causes, as sovereign conditions, or as object-support conditions at any time, that is, as past, present, or future. Further, by the time of the *vibhāṣā* compendia, the generative causal functioning typical of conditioned *dharma*s was understood to occur in two stages. In the first stage, a *dharma* projects (*ākṣip-*) or seizes (*pratigrah-*) its effect, and in the second, it presents (*dā-*) or delivers (*prayam-*) that same effect. The first stage occurs only when the causal *dharma* is present, and indeed it is the very projecting or seizing efficacy that determines the *dharma*'s status as present. Depending upon the type of causal functioning, the second stage of generative efficacy can occur either simultaneously with the first stage, that is, when the causal *dharma* and its effect are both present, or at some time subsequent to the first stage, that is, when the causal *dharma* is already past.[130] Hence, past, present, and future *dharma*s can each function causally in multiple ways, and, therefore, must all be said to exist.

Saṅghabhadra will later distinguish clearly between a *dharma*'s preeminent, present functioning, which he terms activity (*kāritra* 作用), and other modes of functioning, which he terms capability

(*sāmarthya* 功能). As in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, activity occurs only in the present and indeed determines a *dharma*'s status as present, but for Saṅghabhadra, this present activity is subsumed within the larger category of capability, which can occur in the past, present, or future. Saṅghabhadra further limits activity to the generative, causal efficacy that is exerted within a given *dharma*'s own stream; capability, by contrast, can be exerted toward a *dharma*'s own stream, as in the case of present or past causal functioning in the second stage of presenting or delivering the effect, or it can be exerted toward the stream of a different *dharma* through various other modes of causal functioning in the past, present, or future. In this latter function, capability becomes an assisting condition that aids a separate *dharma* in the production of its own particular effect.[131] Saṅghabhadra illustrates this distinction between activity (*kāritra*) and capability (*sāmarthya*) through an example that also appears in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*: namely, that of a visual sense organ that is obstructed and unable to see. Even though according to its intrinsic nature, a visual sense organ's distinctive function is seeing material form, sight is not identified as its activity. Instead, its activity is its preeminent, present functioning as the homogeneous cause (*sabhāgahetu*) that produces a similar visual sense organ in the next moment within its own stream. This activity as a homogeneous cause is referred to as the first stage of "seizing the effect" and determines the visual sense organ's status as present. By contrast, the visual sense organ's distinctive function of seeing becomes a condition for the arising of a *dharma* of another stream, namely, visual perceptual consciousness, and is termed capability, not activity. Hence, every present *dharma*, even if unable to perform its distinctive function, still exerts an "activity" as the generative, homogeneous cause that projects its own effect. It is this activity that determines its status as present.[132]

This array of causal relations among *dharmas* is, like their intrinsic nature, also fixed; once a *dharma*'s status as a particular type of cause or condition has been determined, there is no time at which it loses that status, whether or not it is actually so functioning.[133] Since there is no time at which a *dharma* cannot be considered a cause, and since causal functioning, or the potential for causal functioning, signifies existence, there is then no time at which a *dharma* does not exist. Hence, the Sarvāstivādins' declaration that "everything exists" also implies that past, present and future *dharmas* exist.[134] The reasoned arguments offered for the existence of past and future *dharmas* are also grounded in this basic principle that causes must exist as real

entities (*dravyatas*). Different arguments are offered in different texts, but they can be grouped according to four basic reasons: (1) in the case of causes that precede their effect, such as the operation of *karman*, the past must exist in order to provide an existent cause for the arising of a present effect; (2) accompaniment (*samanvāgama*) and non-accompaniment (*asamanvāgama*), which connect *dharmas* of all time periods to one's own lifestream, require an existent object upon which to operate; (3) the existence of past causes or future effects can be inferred from the occurrence of their effects or causes in the present; and (4) perceptual consciousness, meditative states, memory, and so forth, require an existent object-support.[135]

SVALAKṢAṆA AND THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL SHIFT

All of these reasons offered for the existence of past and future *dharmas* depend upon the basic principle that causal efficacy demands an existent cause. However, the last reason, that is, the requirement of an existent object-support, points to an epistemologically grounded type of causal functioning that was to become dominant from the period of the *vibhāṣā* compendia onward.[136] This epistemological emphasis is evident both in a shift in the terminology used to describe the character of *dharmas* and in the later definitions offered for existence in the abstract. The shift in terminology is indicated by the terms "particular inherent characteristic" (*svalakṣaṇa* 自相) and "generic characteristic" (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa* 共相), which come to be used in conjunction with and, in the case of the particular inherent characteristic, often in place of intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*). These terms do not appear in the canonical Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts, but are used in the **Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* in connection with the operation of the discrimination of *dharmas* (*dharmapravicaya*),[137] and frequently in the **Āryavasumitrabodhisattvasaṅgītiśāstra*, especially in the context of the arising of perceptual consciousness and cognition.[138] *Lakṣaṇa* appears prominently also in both Dharmaśreṣṭhin's **Abhidharmahṛdaya* and in Upaśānta's commentary, as well as in Dharmatrāta's **Miśrakābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra*, where the particular inherent and generic characteristics are explicitly defined and contrasted.[139]

In the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, the two terms ordinarily occur together in the context of mental faculties such as discrimination (*pravicaya*), views (*dṛṣṭi*), and insight (*prajñā*),[140] and in particular in discussions of the arising and operation of perceptual consciousness. They refer to the

various characteristics or aspects of the object that are apprehended in cognition: the particular inherent characteristic is unique to an individual *dharma*, and the generic characteristic is shared by many *dharma*s. The five externally directed varieties of perceptual consciousness such as visual perceptual consciousness, and so forth, apprehend only the particular inherent characteristics of their appropriate, present object-fields, while the sixth variety of mental perceptual consciousness cognizes *dharma*s of all types and all time periods, and hence apprehends both particular inherent and generic characteristics.[141]

The **Mahāvibhāṣā* identifies the particular inherent characteristic with intrinsic nature (*svabhāva* 自性) and the generic characteristic with a "class nature" (同類性 **samānajātīyatva*),[142] but, as in the case of intrinsic nature, there is some ambiguity in determining the scope of each. In general terms, a single *dharma* is marked by many characteristics: that is, every *dharma* is marked by (at least) one particular inherent characteristic reflecting its intrinsic nature and by multiple generic characteristics, which are shared with other *dharma*s and hence signify the larger categories to which it belongs. The distinction between the particular inherent and the generic characteristics thus discriminates levels in the apprehension or discernment of *dharma*s that serve to clarify the ambiguity encountered in the application of the term *svabhāva* to both individual *dharma*s and to categorial groups.[143] For example, in describing the four fundamental material elements (*mahābhūta*), the **Mahāvibhāṣā* notes that they are marked by the particular inherent characteristics of solidity (*khakkhāṭalakṣaṇa*), and so forth, as well as by the generic characteristic of material form (*rūpalakṣaṇa*), that is, the generic characteristic of the larger material form aggregate in which they are included.[144] However, when the perspective shifts to the level of the aggregates themselves as the salient *dharma*-category, cognition apprehends the particular inherent characteristic of each aggregate and a generic characteristic that spans two or more.[145] This ambiguity in the use of the particular inherent characteristic to refer both to an individual *dharma* and to an aggregate is addressed elsewhere in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, which explicitly mentions two types of particular inherent characteristics: that of the individual, given thing (事自相 **vastusvalakṣaṇa*, **dravyasvalakṣaṇa*) and that of the sense sphere (處自相 **āyatanasvalakṣaṇa*).[146] These two sets of distinctions – that between particular inherent and generic characteristics and that within the particular inherent characteristic itself – both address the

ambiguity inherent in the application of intrinsic nature by formalizing two levels of embedded classification. Both the multiplicity of particular inherent and generic characteristics along with multiple levels of embedding also mirror the multiple perspectives that necessarily accompany all cognition. Thus, the two methods of analytical description either by intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) or by characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) are separated by one important difference: whereas intrinsic nature acquires its special significance in the context of exegetical categorization, the starting point for the characteristics lies in perspectivistic cognition. Ontology is a concern for both systems, but the shift in terminology from intrinsic nature to the characteristics reflects a concurrent shift from a category-based abstract ontology to an epistemological ontology this is experientially or cognitively determined.

And indeed, we find in the mature Sarvāstivāda exegesis of Saṅghabhadra, a definition of existence in the abstract that expresses this new epistemological emphasis. For Saṅghabhadra, as for all Sarvāstivādins, existence is causally grounded, but his definition of existence suggests that this causal efficacy is specifically cognitive: "To be an object-field that produces cognition (*buddhi*) is the true characteristic of existence."[147] Such a definition is succinct, and yet sufficiently broad as to include a variety of different modes of existence. Saṅghabhadra presents a typology of existence based upon those in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, but refined and expanded to express his own further elaboration of the relationship between a *dharma* and its functioning.[148] As in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, Saṅghabhadra first distinguishes between existence as a real entity (*dravyasat*), or absolute existence (*paramārthasat*), and existence as a provisional designation (*prajñaptisat*), or conventional existence (*saṃvṛtisat*). The first category of real entities consists of *dharma*s such as material form that produce cognition without depending upon anything else. The second category of provisional designations includes things such as a pot that produce cognition through primary dependence upon *dharma*s, or things such as an army that produce cognition through a secondary dependence, that is, initially upon other provisional designations and then ultimately upon *dharma*s. Provisional designations can be said to exist as causes of cognition, but since they produce cognition only in dependence upon a real entity and are not themselves *dharma*s determined by intrinsic nature, they cannot be said to exist as real entities (*dravyatas*).

Saṅghabhadra's further analyzes real existence (*dravyatas*) in order to clarify the existence and functioning of *dharma*s and defend the real existence of *dharma*s of all three time periods.[149] In this analysis he further refines the notions of intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) and mode (*bhāva*), and of activity (*kāritra*) and capability (*sāmarthya*), and, thereby, resolves some of the ambiguities noted previously in the discussion of *svabhāva*. That is to say, *dharma*s, which by definition are determined by intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*), are always so determined, whether in the past, present, or future. However, one must distinguish various modes of functioning and hence various modes of existence. A *dharma* can exist as intrinsic nature with activity (*kāritra*), specifically as present, or as intrinsic nature without present activity, that is, as past or future. However, present activity is a subset of a larger category of *dharmic* functioning, which Saṅghabhadra refers to as capability (*sāmarthya*); a *dharma* can exhibit capability in all three time periods. Hence, *dharma*s can exist in different causally functional modes in each of the three time periods: in the present with activity and other capabilities; or in the past or future without activity, but still with various capabilities. Saṅghabhadra refers to these differing modes of existence as *bhāva*.

This model specifying the mechanics of causal functioning and distinguishing modes of existence allows Saṅghabhadra to resolve many problems of earlier Sarvāstivāda analysis. He accepted the descriptive categorization of *dharmas* in terms of intrinsic nature, and his interpretative energies were focused instead on their manner of existence and ontological status: as abstract categories, *dharma*s remain stable in their intrinsic nature, but as existents they change in mode depending upon the various types of causal functioning that they exhibit. Specifically, Saṅghabhadra's clear distinction between activity and capability permitted at least a theoretical resolution of the apparent contradiction between invariant intrinsic nature and impermanent causal functioning as applied to a single *dharma*. A single *dharma* can be apprehended as a category or type, that is, as defined by a single particular inherent characteristic reflecting its invariable identity (*svabhāva*), and yet it can function in many different ways, only one of which, namely activity, must occur when the *dharma* is present. Activity and intrinsic nature are neither identical nor completely different; as a result, the identity of a *dharma* does not change with its transient functioning, nor does variety in functioning entail multiple *dharmas*.[150] Further, for Saṅghabhadra, unconditioned *dharma*s exhibit capability as non-obstructing conditions and

as object-supports in the arising of cognition, and therefore, clearly exist. And yet they lack generative activity in producing an effect and hence cannot be described as "present". And finally, for Saṅghabhadra the term *dharma* does not denote a permanent substance, but rather a cognitive category, an objective locus identifiable through cognition. The world exists only as cognized, and the regularities of this cognized world that are evident in the given objects (*dravya*) of our experience are expressed through its constitutive *dharmas*.

Thus, throughout the course of Buddhist scholasticism, the concept of *dharma* persists as an analytical framework, stable enough to enable coherent sectarian debate and elastic enough to allow refinements and further constructions in interaction with other dominant terms and themes drawn from the larger Indian philosophical milieu. For the Sarvāstivādins, reflections about *dharma* came to be dominated by concern for constructing a thoroughgoing system of causal regularities on the basis of an implicit insight into the conditioned nature of phenomena expressed in the early *sūtras*. And to those familiar with the later history of Buddhist logic and philosophy, it is clear how the progression of Abhidharma thinking about *dharma* from inchoate categorial analysis to the rigorous epistemological ontology of Saṅghabhadra sets the stage for later systematic attempts to dissolve the multiplicity of a causal world into the activity of cognition and consciousness.

NOTES

1 BURNOUF ([1876]1944: 80).
2 GEIGER ([1920]1973: 101–228).
3 For a philological approach, see GEIGER ([1920]1973); a philosophical approach, see STCHERBATSKY ([1923]1970), CONZE (1967: 92–106); an historical approach, see HIRAKAWA (1980, 1988), WATSUJI (1962: 346–389), WARDER (1971), SAKURABE (1969: 41–75), BRONKHORST (1985). For a review of various Western studies of *dhamma*, see CARTER (1978).
4 Various traditional sources also acknowledge different senses of the term *dharma*. For example, Buddhaghosa in D-a 1: 99; Dhs-a 39; PVVŚ *shang* p. 989c 9–14.
5 GEIGER ([1920]1973: 80–101). For a review and evaluation of earlier scholarly debates concerning whether *dharma* theory was a part of the original teaching of the sūtras, see von GLASENAPP (1938). Note also the comments of Johannes BRONKHORST (1985: 319): "A final result of this study may be to explain the presence in the Sūtras of a '*dharma*-theory.' The explanation is not that original Buddhism was, or contained, such a '*dharma*-theory;' rather it points to the influence of Abhidharma-like activities long before the completion of the Sūtrapiṭaka."
6 BRONKHORST (1999b: 19; 1999a: 25).
7 BRONKHORST (1996: 111–112; 1985: 318).

[8] See *mātṛkā* list I, BRONKHORST (1985: 305–306, 318–319). See also GETHIN (1992: 150).
[9] HIRAKAWA (1990: 46; 1988: 97–101). For a review of prior scholarly interpretations, see HIRAKAWA (1968).
[10] HORNER (1948: 115–116). See also, LAMOTTE ([1958]1988: 23–26).
[11] HALBFASS (1992: 32).
[12] HALBFASS (1992: 34). For an extended discussion of *dharma* in Buddhism, see HALBFASS (1992: 53ff.). In discussing what he terms the "nature-philosophical schools," Erich FRAUWALLNER ([1956]1973: pt.2, 62) locates the origin of *dharma* as an independent entity in its sense as "merit" within the "doctrine of works" or "action as a cosmic force." For Frauwallner's view of the relationship between Buddhism and his category of "nature-philosophical schools," see FRAUWALLNER ([1956]1973: pt.2, 7).
[13] SAKURABE (1969: 45–46).
[14] GETHIN (1992: 151). See also GETHIN (1992: 147–154).
[15] WARDER (1971: 275–276).
[16] WARDER (1971: 288; 1971: 286–288).
[17] WARDER (1971: 289).
[18] See BRONKHORST (1987, 1996, 1999a, 1999b); HOUBEN (1995); FRAUWALLNER ([1956] 1973: pt.2, 79ff.); MATILAL (1985: 269ff., 378ff.).
[19] Johannes BRONKHORST (1987, 1999a, 1999b) has suggested that at least the early stages of Sarvāstivāda *dharma* analysis precede grammatical exegesis. Even though his cautions concerning the difficulty of dating the various textual sources and the complex recensional history of the Sarvāstivāda works are commendable, a final determination of the relative dating of Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma and the grammatical exegesis of Patañjali awaits further evidence.
[20] SCHARF (1996: 23–39, 87–89, 116 (P 1.2.64 vt. 35), 129 (P 1.2.64 vt. 45)); BIARDEAU (1964: 43–63); BRONKHORST (1999a: 76–77).
[21] SCHARF (1996: 23–25 (P 5.1.119, 4.1.3)); MATILAL (1985: 380–386); HALBFASS (1992: 90ff.).
[22] BRONKHORST (1994; 1997).
[23] *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* I.1.15 pp. 32–34. See HALBFASS (1992: 92ff.); MATILAL (1985: 294ff.). For the question of the influence of other traditions, in particular Buddhism, on the origin of Vaiśeṣika, see BRONKHORST (1999a: 25–26; 1996: 119); MATILAL (1985: 378ff.).
[24] *Tattvārthādhigamasūtra* V.29, 30, 38 pp. 97–100. See also HALBFASS (1992: 92ff.); MATILAL (1985: 279–280, 294ff.). The association here of *dravya* with arising, passing away, and stability is remarkably similar to the characterization of conditioned *dharmas* by the set of three conditioning characteristics (*saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*) as mentioned in Buddhist *sūtras*: namely, arising (*utpāda*), passing away (*vyaya*), and change in continuance (*sthityanyathātva*). Within the middle period of Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma exegesis, the three conditioning characteristics are expanded to four: namely, birth (*jāti*), continuance (*sthiti*), senescence (*jarā*), and desinence (*anityatā*). See Cox (1995: 146–158, 305–375); *infra* notes #56, 132, 146.
[25] *Pravacanasāra* II 3, 4 pp. 112–117. See also MATILAL (1985: 279–280).
[26] For an in-depth study of the 37 limbs of enlightenment in Pāli sources, see GETHIN (1992).
[27] S 5.111: ... *dhammesu paññāya pavicinati pavicarati parivīmaṃsam āpajjati* ...; cf., with no explicit reference to *prajñā*, SĀ 27 #733 p. 196b21–22. For references using the singular, *taṃ dhammam*, see S 5.331, S 5.68. Rupert GETHIN (1992: 147ff., 168ff.) discusses the difficulty of determining the referents of *dhamma* in the plural as used in the pattern of the mindfulness member of enlightenment (*satisambojjhaṅga*), in contrast to its use in the singular in what GETHIN terms the "process formula." For

passages that associate *dharmapravicaya* with *prajñā* in the context of correct view (*samyagdṛṣṭi*), see M3.72; SĀ 28 #725 p. 203a29ff., 28 #788 p. 204c26ff.
28 Dhs 11ff.; Vbh 107ff.; Paṭis 119; Paṭis-a 1.95.
29 SaṅgP 13 p. 423b11ff., 18 p. 440b20ff.; PP (T.1542) 1 p. 693a19, 2 p. 699c20–23; AMVŚ 141 p. 726b23. See also AMVŚ 95 p. 490b9ff., 95 p. 493b7ff. In the definition of the controlling faculty of insight (*prajñendriya*), see ŚAŚ 5 p. 560c26–561a2. In the definition of correct view (*samyagdṛṣṭi*), see ŚAŚ 4 p. 554a15–27; PP (T. 1542) 8 p. 722a9ff. In the definition of *dharmapravicaya* as a member of enlightenment, see ŚAŚ 6 p. 568b10ff., 9 p. 590c6, *passim*; NA 73 p. 735c2–3.
30 AMVŚ 1 p. 2c23; AKBh.1. 2a p. 2.4; NA 1 p. 329a28ff.
31 AMVŚ 1 p. 4a12ff., 2 p. 5c23ff.
32 AMVŚ 1 p. 2c1ff.
33 AMVŚ 94 p. 487c2–4. For the central role of insight in the Sarvāstivāda path of practice by which defilements are abandoned, see Cox (1992b: 80ff.).
34 AKV 127.27ff., esp. 30 *ime sāsravā ime 'nāsravāḥ. ime rūpiṇaḥ ime 'rūpiṇa iti*, commenting on the definition of insight (*prajñā*) as *dharmapravicaya* in AKBh 2.24 p. 54.22. Saṅghabhadra (NA 10 p. 384b6–7) offers a slightly different explanation as "discriminating the characteristics of an object-support such as false or true." 簡擇所緣邪正等相。說名爲慧。
35 AKBh 1.3 p. 2.20ff. Here (NA 1 p. 329c13–14), Saṅghabhadra cites a scriptural passage: "As long as even one *dharma* is not understood, is not completely comprehended, [and in this way] not abandoned, I do not speak of ending suffering." "This passage is cited in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*" 1.15a–b p. 10 25–26: *nā 'ham ekadharmam api anabhijñāyā 'parijñāya duḥkhasyā 'ntakriyāṃ vadāmī 'ti evam aprahāye 'ty uktam*. See SĀ 8 #223 p. 55b7ff.; cf. S 4.18.
36 DhSk 8 p. 491c18ff. Here, in its comments on *dharmapravicayasambodhyaṅga*, the *Dharmaskandha* resembles an interpretation presented in the *Saṃyuktāgama* (SĀ 27 #713 p. 191b24ff.), which discusses each of the seven members of enlightenment in two aspects, and connects in particular the first three members of enlightenment as stages in a process whereby one first becomes mindful internally and externally (*smṛtisambodhyaṅga*), distinguishes virtuous from unvirtuous *dharmas* (*dharmapravicayasambodhyaṅga*), and exerts oneself to cut off unvirtuous and cultivate virtuous *dharmas* (*vīryasambodhyaṅga*). See also ĀVBŚŚ 8 p. 788c7ff. Saṅghabhadra (NA 50 p. 623a15–18) suggests that understanding the distinctions among *dharmas*, such as among those that are favorable, and unfavorable, and giving rise to appropriate effort in abandonment or in cultivation gives the teaching of the Buddha (*dharma*) great utility.
37 DhSk 5 p. 474c14–17, *passim*; SaṅgP 2 p. 372a19–22 (*samprajanya*), 2 p. 374a19–22 (*dṛṣṭi*), 3 p. 375b19–22 (*vipaśyanā*), 5 p. 387c26ff. (*prajñā*), 16 p. 435a25ff. (*dharmapravicayasambodhyaṅga*), *passim*; AMVŚ 33 p. 172b1–2.
38 Edward Conze (1967: 97–98) describes a process of "getting *dharmas* into view," which occurs in three steps: (1) differentiation, through which everyday objects are broken up into their constituent factors; (2) depersonalization, through which all reference to "oneself" is eliminated; and (3) evaluation that the *dharmic* view is more accurate than the common sense view.
39 The set of four trance states (*dhyāna*) is frequently added to the list of 37 in formulaic descriptions of practice. See Bronkhorst (1985: 306); Gethin (1992: 180–182).
40 Rupert Gethin (1986: 49) suggests that even though each of these three sets is discussed to varying degrees in the *suttas*, the threefold grouping as a unified and exhaustive analytical device only became standard with early Abhidhamma exegesis.
41 For further discussion of "attribute-*mātṛkās*," see Frauwallner (1995: 5–11).
42 Wilhelm Halbfass (1992: 48ff.) distinguishes between methods of categorization that are "vertical" – that is, cosmological and diachronic reflecting stages in evolu-

tion, as in the case of Sāṃkhya – and "horizontal" – that is, enumerative and synchronic reflecting the classification of ultimate entities, as in the case of Vaiśeṣika.

[43] DhSk 10 p. 498b12–499c24; PP (T.1542) 8 p. 723a24–c2. For a discussion of the 22 controlling faculties and their development throughout early Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts, see SAITŌ (2002). SAITŌ also examines the different orders in which the controlling faculties are enumerated and explores various related doctrinal and historical questions.

[44] For an in-depth study of the development of the *pañcavastuka* and its relation to other taxonomic systems such as the set of five aggregates, see FRAUWALLNER (1995: 135–147).

[45] Tetsurō WATSUJI (1962: 366ff.) discusses the development of the fivefold taxonomy in terms of the application of several abstract distinctions: for example, between the material and the non-material; thought (as the fundamental perceiving organ) and non-thought (including thought concomitants as the object-field of thought); dissociated and not dissociated; conditioned and non-conditioned.

[46] See Cox (1995).

[47] See Cox (1995: 67–78). Discussing the meaning of *dharma* in the context of Buddhist Abhidharma, Wilhelm HALBFASS (1992: 53–54) states: "Our question is: What is the role of *dharma* as a category of enumeration and classification? What is it that is being enumerated, classified, and identified in the *dharma* lists? But can we determine the meaning of *dharma* as such, regardless of the fact that it is the ultimate unit of enumeration and identification? In a sense, enumeration and identification, or rather enumerability and identifiability, constitute the meaning of *dharma*."

[48] For an interpretation of *dharmas* as "patterns of interconnection," particularly in relation to cognition, see WALDRON (2002: 2–16).

[49] See AMVŚ 31 p. 162b19–20: 復次一切法中唯有涅槃是善是常 。, 73 p. 380b27–28: 復次擇滅涅槃是常是善不變不易 。 生老病死所不能壞是勝義法 。, 8 p. 39c10–12: 問此中所說。當云何通。答涅槃中有常相。若謗無涅槃。亦謗此常相。如指中有四處。若撥無指 。亦撥四處 。 See also AKBh 1.48b p.37.3: "Permanent *dharmas* are unconditioned." *nityā dharmā asaṃskṛtāḥ*. AMVŚ 8 p. 38c26–27: 問何謂非常 。答諸有爲法。

[50] For a discussion of the views of permanence and impermanence, see AMVŚ 8 p. 38c25ff.; for the 62 false views presented in the *Brahmajālasutta*, see AMVŚ 199 p. 196b26ff.

[51] For a general discussion of conditioned and unconditioned *dharmas*, see AMVŚ 76 p. 392c7–393a8. See also ĀVBSŚ 1 p. 724c13–20.

[52] See, for example, AMVŚ 79 p. 407a7–8: 復問取蘊爲常非常 。答言非常一剎那後決定不住。For references to scriptural passages that assert the impermanence of conditioned *dharmas*, see AMVŚ 55 p.283c2–5: 如契經說 。苾芻當知。色是無常。諸因諸緣能生色者亦是無常。既是無常因緣所起色云何常。受想行識亦復如是 。, 105 p. 542b10: 觀有爲法變壞無常 。For the equivalence of *saṃskṛtadharma* and *saṃskāra*, see AMVŚ 25 p. 127b4. 彼行聲說一切有爲法。; for a discussion of *saṃskāra* and *saṃskṛta* see HIRAKAWA (1988: 106–116).

[53] See the scriptural passages cited in AKBh 6.3 p. 331.5–7, 6.3 p. 331.16, 20–21; AKV 519.24–25; SĀ 17 #473 p. 121a10–13, 17 #474 p. 121a26–27; S 4.216, 220–21.

[54] AMVŚ 193 p. 919b17–18, 199 p. 996c10ff. See also AMVŚ 11 p. 55a22–28. For the model of "hidden" and "manifest," see also Saṅghabhadra's defense of the theory of Dharmatrāta concerning the distinction among *dharmas* of the past, present, and future as based upon a difference in nature or mode of existence (*bhāva*). See *infra* notes #111,117. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (AKBh 5.26a–b p. 297.4–5) claims that Dharmatrāta' s theory implies a type of transformation (*pariṇāma*) similar to that of the Sāṃkhyas. Saṅghabhadra explains the Sāṃkhya theory of transformation as entailing a permanent intrinsic nature or real entity (體 **svabhāva*,

dravya) that extends through the three time periods in such a way that the *dharma* is hidden and then becomes manifest. Instead, according to Saṅghabhadra, Dharmatrāta claims merely that when *dharmas* pass through the time periods, they differ in mode of existence (性類 *bhāva*), even though they are the same in intrinsic form (體相 **svarūpa*). This position, Saṅghabhadra concludes, is identical to that of Vasumitra. NA 52 p. 631b6–10: 最初執法轉變故應置在數論朋中。今謂不然。非彼尊者說有爲法其體是常。歷三世時法隱法顯。但說諸法行於世時。體相雖同而性類異。此與尊者世友分同。何容判同數論外道。For 體相 see *infra* note #67. The **Miśrakābhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* (MAHŚ 11 p. 962a1–5) describes Dharmatrāta's view as "transformation Sarvāstivāda" (當知此是轉變薩婆多), but does not overtly criticize it nor does he connect it with the Sāṃkhya position. For the differences in the assessment of Dharmatrāta's theory in these various sources and the possible implications of the connection of Dharmatrāta's theory with "transformation," see KAWAMURA (1974: 45–47).

[55] See AMVŚ 200 p. 1003c18ff.: 問諸色心等何故非常。答轉變非恒。豈是常住。問寧知轉變不由隱顯而執彼體有生滅耶。In the following section, arguments against the model of the manifestation of a hidden essential character are given by both Vasumitra and a Bhadanta. For a review of references to Bhadanta in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* and the various masters to whom the term can refer, see YAMADA (1959; 84, 437–438).

[56] See Cox (1995: 146–158, 305–375). These four conditioning characteristics exist as discrete, real entities that occur together with each *dharma* and include birth (*jāti*), continuance (*sthiti*), senescence (*jarā*), and desinence (*anityatā*). They act as immediately assisting conditions that aid a *dharma* in its function as a predominant, homogeneous cause and enable the arising of a *dharma's* present activity of projecting its own effect. See NA 13 p. 409a2–c8; Cox (1995: 329–333); *supra* note #24, *infra* notes #132, 146.

[57] AMVŚ 76 p. 392c19–29 問有爲無爲是何等義。答若法有生有滅有因有果得有爲相。是有爲義。若法無生無滅無因無果。得無爲相。是無爲義。復次若法依屬因緣和合作用是有爲義。若法不依屬因緣和合作用是無爲義。復次若法爲生所起。爲老所衰。爲無常所滅。是有爲義。與此相違是無爲義。復次若法流轉於世。能取果。有作用分別所緣。是有爲義。與此相違是無爲義。復次若法墮世墮蘊與苦相續。前後變易有下中上是有爲義。與此相違是無爲義。Following this passage (AMVŚ 76 p. 392c29–393a8), four masters give explanations of the distinction between the characteristics of impermanence and permanence. See also AMVŚ 33 p. 171a2–3: 若爾涅槃隨得變易。應無常故不應正理。Yaśomitra (AKV 90.22–23), commenting on AKBh 1.48 b p. 37.3, states: "The restriction is 'only unconditioned [*dharmas*] are permanent.' [They are] permanent due to the absence of passing through the time periods." *asaṃskṛtā eva nityā ity avadhāraṇam. adhvasaṃcārābhāvāt nityāḥ*; AMVŚ 23 p. 116c1–4: 問何故作此論。答爲止他宗顯正義故謂或有執過去未來體非實有。現在雖有而是無爲。爲止彼宗顯過去未來體是實有。現在是有爲世所攝故。, 23 p. 116c8–10: 爲止彼宗顯示緣起是有爲法墮三世故。無無爲法墮在三世。, 38 p.198c12–14: 無爲法生住老無常當言無爲耶有爲耶。答應言無爲法無生住老無常。, 39 p. 203a4–8: 答無爲無有生相合義故不可生。如虛空等。無破因合故不可破。無斷因合故不可斷。無生相合故不可生應知亦爾。生相與彼未嘗合故。and for this last passage in reference to the conditioning characteristic of desinence, see AMVŚ 39 p. 203a17–21.

[58] AMVŚ 75 388b19–389a7.

[59] AMVŚ 75 p. 388c8–10: "Space exists as that non-obstruction or non-resistance within which material form moves, extends, and grows." 如品類足作如是言。云何虛空謂有虛空無障無礙色於中行周遍增長。See also PP (T. 1542) 1 p. 694a29–694b1: 虛空云何。謂體空虛。寬曠無礙。不障色行。; PP (T.1541) 1 p. 628c24–25. This definition of the unconditioned *dharma* space from the *Prakaraṇapāda* resem-

bles the definition proposed later by the **Abhidharmahṛdayaśāstra* and the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya:* that is, as non-obstruction (*anāvṛti*) that affords room for the movement of material form characterized by resistance. See AKBh 1.5d p. 3.22–23: *tatrā ʻkāśam anāvṛtiḥ: anāvaraṇasvabhāvam ākāśaṃ yatra rūpasya gatiḥ.* See also AHŚ 4 p. 831b10–11: 無罣礙之相是名曰虛空 。; AHŚ-U 6 p. 866b27–28; MAHŚ 9 p.944a6–7: 無諸障閡相是說爲虛空者 。 謂不障閡種種色 。以有來去等故說虛空。 However, the **Mahāvibhāṣā*'s refusal to endorse this definition and the absence of an alternative suggests that space and very possibly all categories of unconditioned *dharmas* were still being formulated in this middle period of Sarvāstivāda exegesis. For conditioned and unconditioned varieties of space, cf. ŚAŚ 21 p. 663c9ff. For an examination of changes in the interpretation of cessation not resulting from consideration (*apratisaṃkhyānirodha*), see MIYASHITA (1994: 3–4); MIYASHITA (1989).

60 AMVŚ 75 p. 388c13–29.

61 Saṅghabhadra (NA 17 p. 430a14–16) suggests that space can be known through inference on the basis of its function. 謂如眼等。雖不現知。 而由有用 。比知有體。如是虛空 。 亦有用故 。 比知有體 。 用如前說 。 是故虛空 。 別有實體 。

62 AMVŚ 75 p. 388c16–18:若無虛空一切有物應無容處。既有容受諸有物處知有虛空。

63 AMVŚ 75 p. 388c23–24: 既現見有無障礙處故 。 知虛空決定實有 。 無障礙相是虛空故 。See also Yaśomitra's comments (AKV 15.9–12) on AKBh 1.5d p. 3.22.

64 See also MAHŚ 9 p. 944a7–9, where this view is attributed to the Dārṣṭāntikas; VŚ 6 p. 460c23ff., to Dharmatāta; and AVŚ 39 p. 291b13ff., to Buddhadeva. Saṅghabhadra (NA 3 p. 347b6ff.) attributes a similar view to Sthavira (Śrīlāta) and the Dārṣṭāntikas: namely, that space as a material element cannot be distinguished from space as an unconditioned *dharma*, neither of which then exists as a real entity (*dravyatas*). After citing a supporting scriptural passage, Saṅghabhadra suggests that space as an unconditioned *dharma* functions to provide a place for light; the cause (space), which exists as a real entity in intrinsic form, is manifested by means of this effect (the appearance of light). Similar to the arguments by Vasumitra in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* that are cited here, Saṅghabhadra continues (NA 3 p. 347b12–16): "If there were no space, there would be no light. Since there is light, distinctions in material form are grasped by visual perceptual consciousness. Therefore, space exists because it is able to provide a place for light, and so forth. It is proven that space exists as a real entity." 此經意說 。 虛空無爲 。 雖無所依 。 而有所作 。謂能容受一切光明。以果顯因。有實體相。虛空無者。應無光明。既有光明。眼識所取。是色差別。故有虛空。以能容受光明等故。實有虛空理極成立。

65 AMVŚ 75 p. 388c 28–29: 評曰應作是說 。 實有虛空非彼不知即謂非有由前教理實有虛空 。See MAHŚ 9 p. 944a9–10; and various views presented in ĀVBSŚ 2 p. 732c16ff.

66 AMVŚ 75 p. 389a1–2: 問若爾虛空有何作用 。 答虛空無爲無有作用 。然此能與種種空界作近增上緣。By the time of the *vibhāṣā* compendia, the Sarvāstivādins had developed a system of six causes and four conditions. The six causes include: the associated cause (*saṃprayuktahetu*); the simultaneous cause (*sahabhūhetu*); the homogeneous cause (*sabhāgahetu*); the omnipresent cause (*sarvatragahetu*); the cause of maturation (*vipākahetu*): and the non-obstructing cause (*kāraṇahetu*). The four conditions include: the causal condition (*hetupratyaya*); the immediately contiguous condition (*samanantarapratyaya*); the object-support condition (*ālambanapratyaya*); and the sovereign condition (*adhipatipratyaya*). See AMVŚ 16 p. 79a16–21 p. 109c25.

67 AMVŚ 75 p. 389a5–7: 若無虛空 。如是展轉因果次第皆不成立 。勿有此失 。是故虛空體相實有不應撥無。 The Sanskrit equivalent of 體相 is uncertain. In the majority of the six occasions that it is used in Xuanzang's translation of the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, it appears to have been added by Xuanzang, and in only two

places does it have a clear equivalent in the Sanskrit edition. The first is AKBh-Xz 2 p. 11c6 (AKBh 1.43d p. 32.14), where its equivalent is *dravya*. 體相 is also used to translate what is probably *dravya* in Saṅghabhadra's paraphrase of Dharmatrāta's theory. (NA 52 p. 631b9) In the statement of Dharmatrāta's view, the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (AKBh 5.26a–b p. 296.10–11) clearly uses *dravya*, and Xuanzang's translation (AKBh-Xz 20 p. 104c3–4; cf. NA 52 p. 631a14) uses the simple term 體. The second place where 體相 has a clear Sanskrit equivalent, AKBh-Xz 4 p. 19c9–10 (AKBh 2.22d p. 53.14–15), is within a view attributed by Yaśomitra (AKV 125.5–7) to the Sautrāntikas. Here, it is equivalent to *svarūpa*, which Yaśomitra glosses with *dravya*; it is contrasted with *bīja*, or latent seed, which Yaśomitra glosses with *śakti*, power, or *sāmarthya*, capability. This sense of 體相 as intrinsic form in contrast to power or capability is also evident in many of the uses of 體相 in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, where it appears several times in a reference to the Buddha's unique ability to discern the character and activity of *dharmas*. AMVŚ 142 p. 730c12–13: 脇尊者言。佛於諸法了達究竟。善知諸法體相勢用餘不能知。See also AMVŚ 152 p. 775b29–775c1, 129 p. 674c4–5, cf. 129 p. 674c8–10. However, even in these obviously similar passages, the Chinese terms used for "character" and "activity" are not identical indicating the difficulty in securely determining Sanskrit equivalents even in the case of Xuanzang's Chinese translations. The equivalent *svarūpa* is also suggested by several passages in Saṅghabhadra's **Nyāyānusāra*, for which there is a close analogue in the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjikā* (TSP #1803–4 p. 620). See, for example, NA 50 p.625a20ff., 52 p. 631c25ff., 52 p. 632a4ff., 53 p. 636a29ff. For discussions of 體相 see Katō (1985: 497); Aohara (1986b: 35); Fukuda (1988: 58–61).

[68] AMVŚ 21 p. 107b6, 21 p. 108c26–27, 21 p. 109a29.

[69] See AMVŚ 20 p. 103c23–25, 21 p. 105c13–14, 21 p. 105c17–20. For two types of non-obstructing causes, the "predominant" (*pradhāna*) or generative, and the simple non-obstructing, see AKBh 2.50a p. 82.25ff.; 2.56b p. 94.22ff.; AKV 222.2ff. For *ālambanapratyaya* as non-generative, see AKBh 5.27c p. 299.18ff.; AKV 474.10ff. For unconditioned *dharmas* as being without a cause or an effect, see AKBh 2.55d p. 91.5ff.; AKV 216.23ff.

[70] AHŚ-U 1 p. 834a2–3: 法者持也。持於自性。; MAHŚ 1 p. 870c5. See also PVVŚ *shang* p. 989c13–14; Dhs-a 39. Dharmaśreṣṭhin's **Abhidharmahṛdaya* (AHŚ 1 p. 809a9ff, 1 p. 809a19–23) does not contain this definition, but it does begin with a discussion about the characteristics of *dharmas* (法相). These include not only characteristics such as the solidity of earth, but also the characteristics of impermanence, suffering, and non-self. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (AKBh 1.2b p. 2.10) uses *svalakṣaṇa* in place of *svabhāva* in Upaśānta's definition: "Etymologically, '*dharma*' comes from upholding a particular inherent characteristic." *nirvacanaṃ tu svalakṣaṇadhāraṇād dharmaḥ*. See also AKBh-Xz 1 p. 1b8–9; AKBh-P 1 p. 162a8. Yaśomitra's comments here (AKV 9.18–19, 9.22–23) resemble the treatment of characteristics by Dharmaśreṣṭhin, but Yaśomitra distinguishes between particular inherent characteristics (*svalakṣaṇa*), such as solidity in the case of earth, and generic characteristics (*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*), such as impermanence and suffering in the case of all conditioned *dharmas*: *dharmalakṣaṇam ve 'ti svasāmānyalakṣaṇam khakkhaṭalakṣaṇaḥ pṛthivīdhātur anityaṃ duḥkham ity evam ādi*. Cf. PVVŚ *shang* p. 989b17–18; MAHŚ 1 p. 870c7–10. This definition of *dharma* does not appear in either Saṅghabhadra's **Nyāyānusāra* or **Abhidharmasamayapradīpikā* (T.1563).

[71] AMVŚ 112 p. 580b28–c1: 自性能持自體不失故說爲根。如是無爲能持自體故說爲根。亦無有過。This definition of *mūla* occurs at the end of a section discussing the three unvirtuous roots (*akuśalamūla*) of lust (*rāga*), hatred (*dveṣa*), and delusion (*moha*).

[72] AMVŚ 71 p. 367c24–25, esp. p. 368a16–17: 任持故名界者。謂此諸界任持自性。AVŚ 38 p. 279c29–280a1; VŚ 5 p. 448c21–448c26. This discussion of the meaning of *dhātu* occurs after a general introduction to a section on the 18 elements (*dhātu*).

[73] The **Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra* and the **Mahavibhāṣā* cite inclusion (*saṃgraha*) as one among a number of fundamental methods or topics (14 or seven), by which one can acquire correct understanding of the meaning of Abhidharma. These methods constitute a type of attribute matrix by which the nature and function of *dharmas* can be specified and, thereby, clarified. See AVŚ 12 p. 92a18–26; AMVŚ 23 p. 116b16–25; cf. VŚ 1 p. 417a15–16.

[74] See JP 3 p. 929b13ff.; AMVŚ 46 p. 236b18ff. The 16 categories are: three fetters (*saṃyojana*), three unvirtuous roots (*akuśalamūla*), three fluxes (*āsrava*), four floods (*ogha*), four connections (*yoga*), four attachments (*grahaṇa*), four ties to the body (*kāyagrantha*), five hindrances (*nivaraṇa*), five fetters (*saṃyojana*), five fetters belonging to the lower realm (*avarabhāgīyasaṃyojana*), five fetters belonging to the upper realm (*ūrdhvabhāgīyasaṃyojana*), five views (*dṛṣṭi*), the group of six desires (*kāmakāya*), seven contaminants (*anuśaya*), nine fetters (*saṃyojana*), and 98 contaminants (*anuśaya*).

[75] AMVŚ 59 p. 306b10ff.

[76] AMVŚ 59 p. 306b12–14: 答爲止他宗顯正義故。謂或有說。諸法攝他性非自性攝。如分別論者。彼依假名契經。及依世俗言論故作是說。Cf. AMVŚ 106 p. 550a7–11, 154p. 785b2–4,167 p. 841b19–22,197 p. 985b5–11. See also AHŚ 1 p. 810b6ff.; AHŚ-U 1 p. 836b11ff.; MAHŚ 1 p. 880b10ff.; AKBh 1.18 p.12.4ff.

[77] AMVŚ 59 p. 306c2–6.

[78] AMVŚ 59 p. 307a9–13.

[79] AMVŚ 59 p. 308 20–28: 問云何諸法各攝自性 。 答自性於自性是有是實是可得故說名爲攝 。 自性於自性非異非外非離非別恒不空故說名爲攝 。自性於自性非不已有非不今有非不當有故名爲攝。自性於自性非增非減故名爲攝。諸法自性攝自性時 。 非如以手取食指捻衣等 。 然彼各各執持自體令不散 。然彼各各執持自體令不散壞故名爲攝。於執持義立以攝名。故勝義攝唯攝自性。

[80] For the periodization of Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma texts, see Cox (1992b, 1995: 29–37).

[81] At least in its bare listing of basic categories, if not in its detailed application of the method of inclusion, the **Śāriputrābhidharmaśāstra* can be dated to the early period of northern Indian Abhidharma texts. See YAMADA (1959: 69–81); *supra* note #80.

[82] ŚAŚ 21–22 p. 661a15–671b23.

[83] ŚAŚ 21 p. 666c19–20: 眼入法幾陰界入攝 。問何等法 。問眼入法 。除餘法 。除何等法。非眼入法。

[84] In Xuanzang's translations of later Sarvāstivāda texts, the translation 自性 is frequently used for *svabhāva*, while in his translation of the early Sarvāstivāda canonical texts it usually appears with the sense of "oneself" (*ātman*). Other possible equivalents for *svabhāva* include: 自體, which in the earlier texts is usually used in a context that suggests *ātmabhāva*; 性, frequently used as an equivalent for the abstract *-tva* or *-tā* suffixes; and 體, which, when used alone, can be used as an equivalent of *bhāva*, and not *svabhāva*.

[85] For a prominent exception to this generalization, where the term 自性 is used in an early canonical text with the sense of "intrinsic nature" (*svabhāva*), see the *Jñānaprasthāna* (JP 2 p. 923b19ff., esp. p. 923c17–24): 又涅槃不應有學有無學有非學非無學。若如是者 。應成二分諸法 。不決定故 。應有雜亂 。是則不應施設諸法性相決定 。佛亦不說涅槃有學有無學性。以涅槃恒是非學非無學諸法決定。無有雜亂。恒住自性。不捨自性。涅槃常住。無有變易。是故涅槃但應言非學非無學。See the lengthy

treatment of this issue concerning the nature of *nirvāṇa* in AMVŚ 33 p. 168b23ff.; *infra* note #91.

86 For the term *pariniṣpanna* used in connection with the intrinsic nature (*svabhāva*) or particular inherent characteristic (*svalakṣaṇa*) of a *dharma*, see YBh 122. 14ff. (YBh-Xz 6 p. 304b26–27): "The past exists, the future exists, determined by a characteristic, just like the present; [they] exist as real entities, and not as provisional designations." *asty atītaṃ. asty anāgataṃ. lakṣaṇena pariniṣpannaṃ. yathai 'va pratyutpannaṃ. dravyasat. na prajñaptisat*; and in the same section, YBh 125.4–7 (YBh-Xz 6 p. 304b24ff., esp. 6 p.304c5ff.): "That *dharma* which is established by a characteristic is determined by that [characteristic]." *yo dharmo yena lakṣaṇena vyavasthitaḥ [sa] tena pariniṣpannaḥ*. See also an early (c. 1st cent. CE) Gāndhārī Abhidharma manuscript, Cox (forthcoming a: lines 78–80); Cox (forthcoming b). For references in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, see AMVŚ 30 p. 154b18–20: 以一切法自性定故諸有爲法皆有勝劣自體決定 。, 23 p. 116c19–20: 謂五蘊等自相決定。This passage is commenting specifically on the Vibhajyavāda assertion that dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) is unconditioned, which they support through a scriptural reference (AMVŚ 23 p. 116c6–8): "Whether Tathāgatas arise or do not arise, this principle is established – the establishment of *dharmas*, the fixedness of *dharmas*, namely, the process of conditioning, and it is this [process of conditioning] that the Tathāgata awakens to and comprehends." 如來出世若不出世法住法性。佛自等覺爲他開示乃至廣說。See S 2.25: *uppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ anuppādā vā tathāgatānaṃ, ṭhitā va sā dhātu dhammaṭṭhitatā dhammaniyāmatā idappaccayatā. taṃ tathāgato abhisambujjhati abhisameti*. See also SĀ 12 #296 p. 84b16-18, p. 84b19–21; Kv 319ff. The **Mahāvibhāṣā* responds (AMVŚ 23 p.116c11–15) that this *sūtra* passage does not state that dependent origination is unconditioned, but rather that the cause and effect relationships that it describes are determined: namely, that ignorance is determined as the cause of motivations, and so on. The **Mahāvibhāṣā* explains (AMVŚ 23 p. 116c14): "The phrase 'the establishment of *dharmas*, the fixedness of *dharmas*,' means 'determination,' and not 'unconditioned'." 法住法性是決定義。非無爲義 。; and (AMVŚ 23 p. 116c19–20) "Just as the five aggregates are determined in their particular inherent characteristics, so also dependent origination is determined in the relation between cause and effect." 謂五蘊等自相決定說如是言。緣起亦依因果決定。It is probable that this passage uses 決定 to refer to *sthitatā* or to *niyāmatā* as found within the *sūtra* passage, but as suggested in the final statement concerning the determination of the five aggregates, its sense would appear to be equivalent to *pariniṣpanna*. A connection between *sthitatā* and *pariniṣpanna* is also suggested by a passage in the *Kathāvatthu* (Kv 459ff.) that discusses *ṭhitatā* in terms of *parinipphannatā*. See also AMVŚ 23 p. 118b20–22: 集異門論及法蘊論俱作是說 。 若無明生行 。 決定安住不雜亂者 。 名緣起法 。 亦名緣已生法 。.

87 AMVŚ 74 p. 381b3–6: 此我所依立爲內處 。 我所緣者立爲外處 。 然內外名非圓成實 。 謂於我是內者於他名外 。 於我是外者於他名內故 。 而且依一立內外非名非不決定 。, 113 p. 588a22–24: 若雜穢語業道增時 。 一切外物時候乖變。速疾磨滅多不成實 。, *passim*; in reference to the characteristics of non-self (*anātman*) and impermanence (*anityatā*), see AMVŚ 9 p. 45a22ff.

88 The Pāli equivalent *parinipphanna* appears in the *Kathāvatthu*, but otherwise is used only in the commentarial literature. For the text proponent of the *Kathāvatthu*, *pariniphanna* apparently has the connotation of being invariably established (Kv 511 ff.), particularly in the context of being conditioned as in the case of an actually occurring *dharma* (Kv 459ff., 626ff.). Unfortunately, the sense of the term intended by the opponents is uncertain.

89 The need to clearly discriminate *dharmas* in order to avoid their confusion, especially in the context of inclusion, is a frequent issue in the **Āryavasumitrabo-*

dhisattvasaṅgītiśāstra. See ĀVBSŚ 1 p. 724a21–25: 尊作是說。當言無量相。設一相者。法則有壞。法則有亂。此無有定處。如此諸法而有自相。猶如此有爲法不可得作無爲法。無爲法亦不可得作有爲法。; ĀVBSŚ 3 p. 737c22ff. esp.p. 737c22f. *passim.* See also PVVŚ *shang* p. 989b28–c1: 有說此論略顯諸法體類差別不相雜亂攝一切法。故唯說五。

[90]AMVŚ 33 p. 169a9–11 彼作是說。涅槃自性有三種相。一學二無學三非學非無學。Similarly, the Vibhajyavādins contend (AMVŚ 33 p. 169a29–b1): "*Nirvāṇa* is subject to modification and is not determined; it is possible that it has three types." 答如是者是分別論者答。我說涅槃轉變不定可有三種故言如是。See also AMVŚ 33 p. 169c7ff.

[91]AMVŚ 33 p. 169a14–15: 如何涅槃三得得故便有三相。一法不應有三種體相即體故。

[92]AMVŚ 33 p. 171a22–24: 若一涅槃隨得轉變。則一切法皆應不定。若不決定應有雜亂。若有雜亂不應施設常無常等性相決定。

[93]AMVŚ 33 p. 171a29–b2: 以涅槃恒是非學非無學。諸法決定無有雜亂。恒住自性不捨自性。 See also JP 2 p. 923c21–23.

[94]AMVŚ 76 p. 394b23–24: 謂一切法已有自性本來各住自體相故。See also VK 12 p. 589c27–28, *passim*; JP 2 p. 923c21–23; AHŚ 1 p. 810b8; AHŚ-U 1 p. 836b13ff.; MAHŚ 1 p. 880b12ff.

[95]AMVŚ 52 p. 272a21–22: 自體在者。謂一切法各住自體自我自物自相自分自本性中。For other references to this or similar formulaic lists, see AMVŚ 1 p. 4a10–11, 6 p. 29c23, 23 p. 117c23–24, 39 p. 200a21–22, 46 p. 237c9–10, 71 p. 367c20, 73 p. 379a10, 76 p. 393c5–6, *passim*; PVVŚ *shang* p. 990b13–14.

[96]AMVŚ 76 p. 393c4–6: 問如是三世以何爲自性。答以一切有爲法爲自性。如說自性。我物自體相分本性應知亦爾。已說自性。

[97]See AMVŚ 76 p. 393a11–15, for the view of the Dārṣṭāntikas and the Vibhajyavādins, who claim that the time periods and conditioned forces are different: "The nature of the time periods is permanent (*nitya*) and the nature of conditioned forces is impermanent (*anitya*). When conditioned forces pass through the [three] time periods, it is like fruit in containers, which come out of one container and enter another container, or like a number of people, who come out of one house and enter another house. Conditioned forces are just like this: [they] enter the present time period from the future time period and enter the past time period from the present time period." 如譬喻者分別論師。彼作是說。世體是常行體無常。行行世時如器中果。從此器出轉入彼器。亦如多人從此舍出轉入彼舍。諸行亦爾。從未來世入現在世。從現在世入過去世。

[98]For *svabhāva* as applied to the aggregates (*skandha*), see AMVŚ 74 p. 383c12–15, 75 p. 386c10–12, 112 p. 579a13–14; to the elements (*dhātu*), see AMVŚ 71 p. 367c13–15, 71 p. 367c19–21, 71 p. 368a16–17; to the sense spheres (*āyatana*), see AMVŚ 73 p. 378c29ff., esp. p. 379a9–11.

[99] AMVŚ 74 p. 383c15ff., esp p. 383c29ff. See also MAHŚ 1 p. 874a24ff.

[100] AMVŚ 74 p. 384a12–14: 雖相去遠以相同故合立色蘊。乃至識蘊無量刹那雖相去遠。而相同故合立識蘊。

[101] Quoted in AKBh 1.20a–b p. 14.5–7.

[102] AMVŚ 74 p. 384a14–25.

[103] AKBh 1.20a–b p. 13.24–25.

[104] AKBh 1.18d p. 12.14–15: *cakṣurindriyaṃ rūpaskandhena cakṣurāyatanadhātubhyāṃ ca duḥkhasamudayasatyābhyāṃ ca saṃgṛhītam. tatsvabhāvatvāt.* See PP (T.1542) 10 p. 732a6; AMVŚ 69 p. 358b8-11. In commenting on this passage, Yaśomitra (AKV 41.10ff.) explains that the smaller is to be included within the larger, and not the larger within the smaller. Hence, the smaller category of the visual controlling faculty, which constitutes merely one part of the material form aggregate,

is to be included within the larger category of the material form aggregate, which includes all varieties of material form. Yaśomitra explains that such inclusion based upon intrinsic nature is absolute (*pāramārthika*), and not conventional or consensual (*sāṃketika*). In the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, individual *dharmas* are frequently specified through this method of inclusion in multiple categorial groups. See, for example, AMVŚ 1 p. 2c 23–25, where inclusion by intrinsic nature is applied to Abhidharma. See also AMVŚ 15 p. 74a23–24, 109 p. 619a9–14, 173 p. 872b9ff.

105 AKBh 1.20a–b p. 13.4ff., esp. p. 13.25ff.; AKV 45. 13ff. For a discussion of the controversy in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* concerning the ontological status of aggregates, sense spheres, and elements and the implications of this controversy for an epistemologically based ontology, see NISHI (1975a: 503ff.); KATŌ (1989: 173–183).

106 For further discussion of levels of intrinsic nature, see NISHI (1975b: 453ff.); TSUKINOKI (1975: 274–278); KATŌ (1989: 173–176).

107 See HALBFASS (1992: 139ff.). for a discussion of the relationship between categoriology and ontology, specifically in the case of Vaiśeṣika.

108 The most likely equivalents for *bhāva* in these early texts are 性, 類, or 體. However, 性 is frequently also used for the abstract suffixes -*tva* or -*tā*, and 類, for *jāti* or *prakāra*, etc. The term 體 most often appears in the compound 自體, regularly used to render *ātmabhāva*, but it is also occasionally used to render -*bhāva* in compound final position with other nouns.

109 For *bhāva* here, I have chosen the intentionally ambiguous translation, "state of being." For examples within the Pāli Abhidhamma texts (Dhs 143; Vbh122), see *itthattaṃ iithibhāva*, "femaleness, the state of being female," and *purisattaṃ purisabhāva*, "maleness, the state of being male." The analogous passage in the *Dharmaskandha* (DhSk 10 p. 498a22 and 26), contains the two terms 女體 and 女性, but it is not certain which is equivalent to -*bhāva* and which indicates the abstract suffix -*tva*. Cf. *supra* note #84, and *infra* notes #115, 116, 117. For a similar construction with -*ttaṃ* and -*bhāva*, see Dhs 177. Further, the compound *paguṇabhāva*, "state of being familiar with," occurs in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* (Dhs 15), in a triad with *paguṇatā* and *paguṇattaṃ*, all of which are used to gloss the abstract form, *pāguññatā*. For similar series, see Dhs 15, 67, 144, 153, 166; Vbh 82. In these cases, the compound-final form -*bhāva* is clearly used together with other abstract forms and hence likely carries the abstract sense of "state," but also probably connotes existence in the sense, "state of being." Aside from the frequently occurring term *attabhāva*, or "personal identity," *bhāva* appears rarely in non-Abhidhamma, Pāli cononical literature. The common set phrase, *anabhāvaṃ gamete*, "one sends to non-existence," is an exception in which *bhāva*/*abhāva* clearly carry the nuance of "existence," as for example in M 1.11; similarly, the compound *bhiyyobhāva*, "state of being more" or "increase," for example in D 2.313. In the Pāli commentarial literature, *bhāva* comes to be used very frequently both alone and in compound-final position.

110 Kv 119ff.

111 Kv 120: *paccuppannaṃ rūpaṃ nirujjhamānaṃ paccuppannabhāvaṃ jahatī'ti. āmantā. rūpabhāvaṃ jahatī'ti. na h' evaṃ vattabbe.* The view of the opponent implied by this criticism resembles the theory of the master Dharmatrāta concerning the distinction among *dharmas* of the three time periods (AKBh 5.26a-b p. 296. 10–15): namely, that *dharmas* of the three time periods are distinguished "due to a difference in *bhāva* (*bhāvānyathātva*), and not due to a difference as real entities (*dravyānyathātva*) ... In this way, when *dharmas* enter the present time period from the future time period, even though they abandon [their] nature as future and attain [their] nature as present, they neither attain nor abandon [their] nature as real entities (體 *dravyabhāva*). Further, when *dharmas* enter the past time period from the present time period, even though they abandon [their] nature as present and attain [their]

nature as past, they neither attain nor abandon [their] nature as real entities." *...bhāvānyathātvaṃ bhavati na dravyānyathātvam...evam dharmo 'py' anāgatād adhvanaḥ pratyutpannaṃ adhvānam āgacchann anāgatabhāvaṃ jahāti na dravyabhāvam. evam pratyutpannād atītam adhvānaṃ gacchan pratyutpannabhāvaṃ jahāti na dravyabhāvam iti.* See also AMVŚ 77 p. 396a13–20; AVŚ 40 p. 295c8–12; VŚ 7 p. 466b8–12.

[112] Kv 120–121: *rūpaṃ rūpabhāvaṃ na jahatī 'ti. āmantā. rūpaṃ niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ aviparināmadhamman ti. na h' evaṃ vattabbe... hañci rūpaṃ aniccaṃ–pe–viparināmadhammaṃ no vata re vattabbe rūpaṃ rūpabhāvaṃ na jahatī 'ti.*

[113] See SaṅgP 11 p. 412a2–4: 云何色蘊。 答諸所有色。若過去若未來若現在。若內若外若麁若細。若劣若勝。若遠若近。如是一切略爲一聚說名色蘊。For analogous descriptions of the other aggregates, see SaṅgP 11 p. 412c5ff.; of the three time periods, see SaṅgP 3 p. 387c12ff.

[114] SaṅgP 11 p. 412a19–22: 云何過去色 。 答若色已起已等起 。 已生已等生 。已轉已現轉 。 已聚集已出現 。 落謝過去盡滅離變 。 過去性過去類過去世攝 。是名過去色 。For an analogous passage, see PP (T.1542) 6 p. 717b20–24.

[115] KATŌ (1985: 501–504). To support his interpretation of *bhāva*, KATŌ also cites passages from the *Prakaraṇapāda* that define various *dharmas* using the term 類 (PP (T.1542) 2 p. 699c8ff., 3 p. 700a16–17, 3 p. 702a5ff.), as well as formulaic definitions of the elements, sense spheres, and perceptual consciousness in terms of three types: that is, those that have functioned, are functioning, or will function as past, present, or future. See SaṅgP 15 p. 492a6–7, 12 p. 492a11–12; DhSk 10 p. 498b27–499a22; PP (T.1542) 2 p. 699a3–699b10, 701a3–5, 8 p. 723a26–29; VK 12 p. 588c12–589a16.

[116] See Cox (forthcoming a: lines 68 and 123–127). Reconstructed Gāndhārī text, line 127: *bhavehi{*ru}poṃ asti nasti {*tra}e {*ru}poṃ di*° This Gāndhārī manuscript also provides evidence for a distinction in use between *bhāva* and *svabhāva*. In one passage explicating the meaning of the phrase "everything exists" (Gāndhārī = G *sarvam asti*) (lines 71–75), the text states that "the state of being a householder exists in the past and future" (G *adidaanagada grihibhava asti*), and so also the state of being a monastery attendant (G *aramiyabhava*), and so forth. Here, *bhāva* (G *bhava*) is used where the issue is one of the existence of these various *dharma*s as past or future. The following passage (lines 75–82) uses *svabhāva* (G *svabhava*) with *parinispanna* (G *parinipana*) to clarify the process by which the various categories of *dharma*s are to be determined and makes the point that categories are discriminated from one another on the basis of intrinsic nature. See Cox (forthcoming b).

[117] The ambiguity in the term *bhāva*, even at the time of the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, is apparent in the criticism of Dharmatrāta's theory of the difference among *dharma*s of the three time periods. See *supra* notes #54, 67, 111. For Dharmatrāta himself, *dharma*s in the three time periods are not different as real entities (*dravya*), but differ only in *bhāva*. The **Mahāvibhāṣā* (AMVŚ 77 p. 396b18–22) criticizes his interpretation, noting that Dharmatrāta would have to explain "what this 'state of being' (類 *bhāva*) is apart from a *dharma's* 'intrinsic nature' (自性 *svabhāva*)." 說類異者。離法自性說何爲類故亦非理。This criticism implies first that, at least for the arbiter of the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, *dravya* is equivalent to *svabhāva*, and second that *bhāva* and *svabhāva*, are so close in meaning that it would be unreasonable to suggest that a *dharma* can be different in one, and not in the other. The assumed identity of *bhāva* and *svabhāva* is also clearly indicated by the, critical verse that Vasubandhu levies against the position that "everything exists" (AKBh 5.27c p. 298.21–22): "Intrinsic nature always exists, and yet the mode of existence is not admitted to be permanent. Further, it is not said that mode of existence is something other than intrinsic nature. [This is an] act [only of] of a god." *svabhāvaḥ sarvadā cā 'sti bhāvo nityaś ca neṣyate na ca svabhāvād bhāvo" nyo vyaktam īśvaraceṣṭitam.* See also AKV 472.25ff.; NA 52 p. 633c14ff. Despite the criticism of the

**Mahāvibhāṣā* it is uncertain what Dharmatrāta himself intended through his use of the term *bhāva* and precisely how he would have distinguished *bhāva* from *dravya* or *svabhāva*. For an interpretation of the possible motivations underlying Dharmatrāta's use of the term *bhāva*, see KATŌ (1985: 495–497).

[118]See AOHARA (1986b: 34–37); AOHARA (1986a: 767–768); FUKUDA (1988: 58ff.); MIYASHITA (1994: 7–8).

[119]AMVŚ 9 p. 42a24–42b4: "Concerning existence, there are those who claim it is of two types: existence as a real entity (實物有 *dravyasat*), as in the case of the aggregates, elements, and so forth; and existence as a provisional designation (施設有 *prajñaptisat*), as in the case of a man, or woman, and so forth. There are those who claim it is of three types: relative existence (相待有), in which a given thing exists relative to one thing and does not exist relative to another; spatially dependent (or contextual) existence (和合有), in which a given thing exists in one place and does not exist in another; and temporally dependent existence (時分有), in which a given thing exists at one time and does not exist at another. There are those who claim it is of five types: nominal existence (名有), as in the case of hair on a tortoise, a horn on a rabbit, sky–garlands, and so forth; real existence (實有), as in the case of all *dharma*s, each of which is established in its intrinsic nature; provisional existence (假有), as in the case of a pot, a cloth, and so forth; existence as a collocation (和合有), as in the case of a collocation of aggregates that is provisionally designated as a person; and relative existence (相待有), as in the case of this and that shore, long and short, and so forth." 然諸有者。有說二種。一實物有。謂蘊界等。二施設有。謂男女等。有說三種。一相待有。謂如是事。待此故有。待彼故無。二和合有。謂如是事。在此處有在彼處無。三時分有。謂如是事。此時分有彼時分無。有說五種。一名有。謂龜毛兔角空花鬘等。二實有。謂一切法各住自性。三假有。謂瓶衣車乘軍林舍等。四和合有。謂於諸蘊和合施設補特伽羅五相待有。謂此彼岸長短事等。The **Abhidharmavibhāṣāśāstra* (AVS 4 p. 30c20–28) gives only the twofold and threefold typologies of existence, and lists them together with a typology of objects of repudiation (**apavāda*) given in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* within the previous section (AMVŚ 9 p. 41c24–49a1).

[120] Such discussions occur frequently in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*, usually with the number of *dharma*–categories exceeding the number of *dravyas*. See AMVŚ 48 p. 250b13ff. (where the number of *dravyas* exceeds the number of *dharma*–categories), 63 p. 325c16ff., 79 p. 408c13ff., 80 p. 412a26ff. For the discussion of the 37 limbs of enlightenment (*bodhipakṣyadharma*), see AHŚ 4 p. 828a29ff.; AHŚ-U 5 p. 862b26ff.; MAHŚ 8 p. 938a20ff.; AMVŚ 96 496a22ff.; AKBh 6.67c–d p. 383.5ff.

[121] AMVŚ 71 p. 367a28ff. The eighteen elements (*dhātu*) include the sets of six sense organs (*indriya*), consisting of the five externally directed sense organs and the mind, their six corresponding object-fields (*viṣaya*), and the six varieties of perceptual consciousness (*vijñāna*) that the organs and object-fields produce. See AMVŚ 71 p. 366a14ff.; AKBh 1.17c–d p. 11.26ff.

[122] Despite this reduction in the number of *dharma*s to either 12 or 17 *dravyas*, the traditional set of 18 categories is explained through the application of three criteria (AMVŚ 71 p. 367b6ff.): that is, the basis (*āśraya*), which yields the six sense organs; that which is dependent upon the basis (*āśrita*), which yields the six varieties of perceptual consciousness; and the object-field (*viṣaya*), which yields the six objects. An alternative view is proposed by the master Vāmalabdha (AMVŚ 71 p. 367c13ff.) who maintains that the number 18 can be explained on the basis of four criteria: intrinsic nature; basis; that which is dependent upon the basis; and the distinction among the aggregates. For Vāmalabdha, see KIMURA (1937: 221); YAMADA (1959: 84).

[123] AMVŚ 142 p. 730a29–730c5.

[124] A final example is significant because it concerns categories of *dharma*s included within the fivefold taxonomy (*pañcavastuka*) of 75 *dharma*s, which came to be rec-

ognized in the later commentarial tradition as the standard listing of *dharma*-categories that exist as real entities determined by intrinsic nature. In discussing two groups of mental concomitants (*caitasika*), namely, the 10 ubiquitous (*mahābhūmika*) and 10 ubiquitous, defiled (*kleśamahābhūmika*) *dharmas*, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* (AMVŚ 42 p. 220a7ff.) observes that even though these 20 categories have separate names, as *dravya* there are only 15 because five of the ubiquitous defiled *dharmas* can be identified with five *dharmas* among the ubiquitous group. As *dharma*-categories within the fivefold taxonomy, these 20 are recognized as discrete, and yet certain *dharmas* can be identified in intrinsic nature; hence, as *dravya*, that is, as they actually occur or as real entities, there are only 15.

125 See Nishi (1975b: 439ff.).

126 AMVŚ 196 p. 982b4–6：問何故作此論。答爲止愚於因緣法執因緣性非實有者意。顯因緣法體性實有故作斯論。 See also AMVŚ 10 p. 47a28–47b1, 16p. 79a19–21, 107p. 555a2–4, 131 p. 680b26ff., 136 p. 702b13–15, 137 p. 709a28–709b1, 146 p. 747a7–8, 165 p. 833a23–26.

127 AMVŚ 55 p. 283a24ff. See *supra* note #66.

128 AMVŚ 71 p. 367b27ff., p. 368a20ff., esp. p. 368b16–20. The classic example that is used in arguments on this point is that of a present, partially homogeneous (*tatsabhāga*) visual sense organ whose visual functioning is for some reason obstructed, but is nonetheless able to function as a cause in producing a visual sense organ in the next moment. See *infra* note #132. For the example of fire, see NA 14 p. 410c8–11.

129 AMVŚ 21 p. 108c21ff., esp. p. 109a 18–20. See also AMVŚ 21 p. 105b23ff., esp. p. 105c9–13, 55 p.283b25ff.

130 AMVŚ 21 p. 108c6ff. See also AMVŚ 18 p. 89b9ff., 47 p. 246a24ff., 76 p. 394a4–21, 119 p. 618c24ff.

131 NA 14 p. 410a3ff., 18 p. 437c6ff., 50 p. 621c28ff., 52 p. 631c5ff.

132 AMVŚ 76 p. 393c26ff. See A-KBh 5.26d p. 297.14ff.; NA 14 p. 410a1ff., 19 p. 447a10ff., 52 p. 631c8ff. This distinction between activity and capability developed by Saṅghabhadra, is less explicit though implied at certain points in the **Mahāvibhāṣā*. The **Mahāvibhāṣā* regularly uses 作用 (**kāritra*) in discussing a *dharma*'s present functioning. See AMVŚ 12 p. 57b4–8, 17 p. 87b19–25, 21 p. 105a6ff., 76 p. 393c13–16. 功能 (**sāmarthya, vyāpāra*), which is used less frequently, at times appears to be synonymous with 作用 (**kāritra*), but occasionally would appear to be distinguished from it, although the distinction is not specified as it will later be by Saṅghabhadra. See AMVŚ 21 p. 105a17, 22 p. 113a28ff., 93 p. 480a26ff. In one passage on the conditioning characteristics of conditioned *dharmas* (*saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*), the **Mahāvibhāṣā* presents two typologies of modification (**vipariṇāma*): one distinguishes between modification in intrinsic nature and modification in activity (作用 **kāritra*), and the other between modification in intrinsic nature and modification in capability (功能 **sāmarthya*) . Whereas in both cases *dharmas* are said to lack modification in intrinsic nature, which does not change, they are subject to modification in both activity and capability, which are distinguished as follows: modification in activity means that a *dharma* does not yet have activity when it is future, attains it upon becoming present, and loses it when it becomes past; modification in capability refers to the capability of such things as the characteristic of birth (*jātilakṣaṇa*) in the future time period, the capability of such things as the characteristic of desinence (*anityatālakṣaṇa*) in the present time period, and the capability of "presenting" the effect (*phaladāna*) in the past time period. See AMVŚ 39 p. 200a14ff., esp. p. 200a29–200b11.

133 AMVŚ 196 p. 982b3ff., 17 p. 86b4ff.

[134] This position that causal functioning necessitates existence does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that "everything exists." For example, the **Mahāvibhāṣā* records a controversy with the Kāśyapīyas, who claimed that the cause of maturation (*vipākahetu*) exists only so long as its matured effect has not yet matured (*avipakvavipāka*); when the matured effect matures and arises, its cause, having performed its function, ceases to exist. This position results in the view that only a portion of the past exists, namely, those past causes of maturation that have not yet produced their matured effects. Hence, the Kāśyapīyas do associate causal functioning with existence, but do not claim that "everything exists." AMVŚ 19 p. 96b6–10, 51 p. 263c25–264a1, 144 p. 741b13–16; Kv 151ff. See also Cox (forthcoming a: lines 3ff.)

[135] All texts also offer scriptural passages in addition to reasoned arguments as support for their position. For a review of differences among the reasons cited in various texts, see Nishi (1975b: 436ff.); Katō (1985: 487–490). See VK 1 p. 531a23–2 p. 537a26; ĀVBSŚ 9 p. 796b13ff.; VŚ 7 p. 464b25–465a25; AVŚ 40 p. 293c28–294b5; AMVŚ 76 p. 393a20–393b27; MAHŚ 11 p. 963b9ff. The **Vibhāṣāśāstra* (VŚ 7 p. 464b25–464c3) alone among the *vibhāṣā* compendia includes the reason of the existent object-support in its discussion of the existence of *dharmas* of the three time periods.

[136] See Katō (1985); Katō (1984: 72ff.); Katō (1989: 174ff.); Nishi (1975b: 457ff.); Hirakawa (1988: 122ff.).

[137] ŚAŚ 4 p. 554a23–27, 5 p. 560c27–561a2, 6 p. 568b10–15, 9 p. 590c1–5. For 相 with the virtually certain equivalent *lakṣaṇa* in the context of the conditioning characteristics (*saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*), see ŚAŚ 16 p. 633b6, 16 p. 636b7ff.

[138] ĀVBSŚ 1 p. 723a1ff., *passim.* For 相 as *lakṣaṇa*, again in the context of the conditioning characteristics (*saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*), see ĀVBSŚ 1 p. 723a26ff.

[139] AHŚ 1 p. 809a9ff., *passim,* where examples are given of various characteristics that will be distinguished as either particular inherent or generic; AHŚ-U 1 p. 835b6ff., *passim*; MAHŚ 1 p. 870c7ff. See also the PVVŚ *shang* p. 990b12ff., p. 990b29–990c13.

[140] See, for example, in definitions of Abhidharma, AMVŚ 1 p. 2b21, 1 p. 3b10–13, *passim*, AMVŚ 29 p. 147a27–29, 41 p. 214a7–8, 42 p. 216c15–218c10. Particular inherent and generic characteristics are also included within a listing of seven methods or topics, cited in the *vibhāṣā* compendia, through which the Abhidharma is to be understood. See AVŚ 12 p. 92a21–26; AMVŚ 23 P. 116b20–25; *supra* note #73.

[141] AMVŚ 13 p. 65a12ff, 30 p. 154c8–9, 127 p. 665b1ff., 131 p. 681c5–6.

[142] AMVŚ 34 p. 179b3–5: 問若爾無慚自性云何。答自體自相即彼自性。如說諸法自性即是諸法自相。同類性是共相。This formula is applied to several *dharmas* throughout the section, AMVŚ 34 p. 179b3–38 p. 196c25. See also AMVŚ 10p. 50b10–11, 48 p. 249b23–25 (where this view is attributed to Vasumitra), 81 p. 420c8–9; AKBh 6.14c–d p. 341.11ff. For definitions of *dharma* that use *svalakṣaṇa*, see *supra* note #70.

[143] Similar ambiguity attends the term *dravya*, as indicated by the discussion in the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (AKBh 2.22d p. 53. 19ff.) as to whether a molecule (*saṃghātaparamāṇu*) consists of eight *dravyas per se*, or eight *dravyas* understood as sense spheres. Yaśomitra (AKV 125.30ff.) glosses the first type of *dravya per se* as "that which has a particular inherent characteristic" (*yasya svalakṣaṇam asti*); concerning the second, he states (AKV 125.32–33): "It is possible to say that *dravya* is also the sense sphere due to its nature as the generic characteristic." (*āyatanam api hi dravyam iti śakyate vaktuṃ sāmānyaviśeṣalakṣaṇasadbhāvāt*)

[144] AMVŚ 127 p. 663b10ff., esp. 15-18. For impermanence, non-self, and suffering also as generic characteristics, see AMVŚ 7 p. 33b4; MAHŚ 1 p. 870c7–10; PVVŚ *shang* p. 989b17–18; AKV 9. 18–19, 22–23.

[145] AMVŚ 42 p. 217a14–16.

[146] AMVŚ 13 p. 65a12–16, 30 127 p. 665b1–4. See also MAHŚ 1 p. 872c22–24. This multiplicity of particular inherent characteristics is also referred to in a lengthy passage in the **Mahāvibhāṣā* (AMVŚ 39 p.200b16–c12) that examines whether the four conditioning characteristics (*saṃskṛtalakṣaṇa*) should be considered particular inherent or generic characteristics. If they were particular inherent characteristics, then one *dharma* would have four distinct characteristics, which would contradict the nature of a single *dharma* as defined by one intrinsic nature. If they were generic characteristics, it would be unreasonable to claim that every conditioned *dharma* has four separate conditioning characteristics. In the following discussion, certain opinions are cited that recognize multiple particular inherent characteristics distinguished as "host" (主自相) and "guest" (客自相) or as "fundamental" (本性自相) and "united with others" (他合自相). The arbiter concludes that the conditioning characteristics are generic characteristics through association (和合共相 **saṃyoga*, **saṃnipāta*). See *supra* note #24.
[147] NA 50 p. 621c21 : 爲境生覺是真有相. See also TSŚ 2 #19 p. 254a2–3; ADV 262.1ff., p. 268.22–24.
[148] NA 50 p. 621c21ff. See also NA 15 p. 421b26ff., 19 p. 447c22ff., 58 p. 666a7ff. Saṅghabhadra also mentions that some teachers recognize a third category of relative existence (**āpekṣika*) that he would include within the prior types. See *supra* note #119; AOHARA (1986a).
[149] NA 13 p. 409b2ff., 2 p. 636a22–24. See also LA VALLÉE POUSSIN (1936–1937); WILLIAMS (1981); AOHARA (1986a); FUKUDA(1988); FRAUWALLNER (1995: 185–208).
[150] For Saṅghabhadra's attempt to defend this position that activity and intrinsic nature are neither the same nor different, see COX (1995: 144–145); AMVŚ 76 p. 394c5ff; AKBh 5.27a p. 297.18ff.; AKV 471.28ff.; NA 52 p. 631c22ff., p. 632c7ff., p. 632c23ff.; TSP #1793ff. p. 617ff., esp. #1806 p. 621 (cf. NA 52 p. 633a24ff.).

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SOME USES OF DHARMA IN CLASSICAL INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

The word *dharma* is used in a variety of meanings. In philosophical parlance it is mainly used in two totally different ways, which one might call the Buddhist and the Brahmanical way. This article will briefly present the way in which the Buddhists came to use the term (usually in the plural), then sketch the development which the Brahmanical concept of dharma (singular) underwent in the hands of the adherents of the Vaiśeṣika philosophy.

With regard to Buddhism we can be brief.[1] The word *dharma* here came to be used for the items collected in lists in what is known by the name Abhidharma. These lists may originally have contained no more than items considered important to be memorized, often mental states. For our present purposes all that counts is that when at last one of the Buddhist schools decided to put order into the inherited teachings, it promoted the items thus collected, the dharmas, to the status of being the ultimate, and only, constituents of all that exists.

This revision, which amounted to a philosophical revolution, apparently took place in the north-west of the Indian subcontinent, at some time during the centuries preceding the common era, and the outcome was primarily preserved in the texts of the Sarvāstivāda school of Abhidharma. This intellectual revolution did more than just turn dharmas into elements of existence. It imposed a thoroughly atomistic vision on common sense reality, thus reducing the latter to non-existence. All complex entities – which includes virtually everything that we are familiar with from experience – were stated to be non-existent, precisely because they were nothing beyond their constituent elements. The impetus to this radical rejection of common sense reality must have come from the Buddhist doctrine according to which no person exists. What we believe is a person is made up of numerous mental and physical states, precisely the things known as dharmas.[2] That is to say, the person does not exist, but the elements that constitute it do. Or more explicitly: the person does not exist because it is complex; its ultimate constituent elements on the other

hand do exist. The same reasoning was applied to other things that have constituent elements.

It will be clear that this kind of logic inevitably leads to the conclusion that only dharmas exist, and that these dharmas cannot themselves harbour constitutive elements. That is to say, the dharmas are irreducible and are for that reason the ultimate constituents of the things that make up phenomenal reality. Strictly speaking the dharmas are the only things that exist, for the objects of phenomenal reality, being made up of more elementary constituents, do not.

Seen in this way, the ontological position of the Buddhist dharmas can easily be defined: they are the only things that really exist. The Sarvāstivādins had more to say about their dharmas, to be sure. Their thoroughly atomistic approach led them to another postulate: the dharmas are momentary. They also made an effort to enumerate all dharmas in an exhaustive list and to categorize them. They went to the extent of deviating from traditional forms of categorization and introducing a new system, called Pañcavastuka, which far more comprehensively summarized all the dharmas in five categories.[3] Nor did they hesitate to introduce newly invented dharmas which they felt were required to arrive at a coherent vision of the world. All this led them into sometimes frighteningly complex arguments, which have the unfortunate tendency of obscuring from view the overall vision that is hidden behind it.

This particular understanding of the dharmas as elements of existence, the only things that really exist, characterizes later developments in Buddhist thought, even in philosophical developments (such as the Madhyamaka philosophy) that came to reject the existence of the dharmas. The position of these latter, called *dharmanairātmya* "non-reality of the dharmas", amounts to a radical denial of all that exists, a position in which even the last remaining anchors in reality, i.e. the dharmas, are removed. In an important way the denial of the dharmas was a continuation of the original denial of empirical reality that characterized the postulation of dharmas as the only existing entities. The denial of composite objects and personalities justified, all by itself, statements of the kind that no Buddha exists or has ever existed, which we find, for example, in the Buddhist Prajñāpāramitā literature. Denying the existence of the dharmas hardly sounds radical in a Buddhism that has already denied the existence of its founder.

Within the Brahmanical philosophies the word dharma is not used as in Buddhism. Fundamentally dharma is here something like 'merit'.

As such there is nothing noteworthy in the concept of dharma in the Brahmanical philosophical systems. Some of these – first of all the Vaiśeṣika – tried to specify the concept. This led to the developments which will be outlined here.

Dharma occupies a prominent position in the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra.* This text begins with the announcement that dharma will be explained (*athāto dharmaṃ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ*). This suggests that dharma plays a fundamental role in this school of thought. However, when we consider this philosophy in its classical form, we find that dharma is not so fundamental after all.

The classical doctrine of Vaiśeṣika finds expression in Praśasta's *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha,* also known by the name *Praśastapādabhāṣya.* This text divides all that exists into six categories, called 'substance' (*dravya*), 'quality' (*guṇa*), 'activity' (*karman*), 'universal' (*sāmānya*), 'specificity' (*viśeṣa*) and 'inherence' (*samavāya*) respectively. It states that knowledge of the essence of these categories, through the similarities and differences between them, is the cause of the highest good.[4] Dharma and its opposite and companion adharma are classified among the qualities; they are qualities that can only reside in a single substance, 'soul' (*ātman*), not in other substances.

Dharma and adharma are not the only qualities that can reside only in the soul. The text provides a complete list of such qualities: knowledge (*buddhi*), pleasure (*sukha*), pain (*duḥkha*), desire (*icchā*), repulsion (*dveṣa*), effort (*prayatna*), dharma and adharma;[5] subliminal impressions (*saṃskāra*) might be included in this list, even though other aspects of saṃskāra allow it to reside in other substances as well. Together, these qualities of the soul account for the psychological functioning of a person. Knowledge, which is experience, causes pleasure or pain; these give rise to desire and repulsion, respectively. Desire and repulsion bring about effort (*prayatna*), which in its turn brings about bodily activities aiming to reestablish or avoid the sources of pleasure and pain, respectively. This leads to new experiences, etc. etc. A further effect of these activities is the production of dharma and adharma, which determine one's future state. Correct knowledge, which is primarily knowledge of the Vaiśeṣika philosophy, will free a person from passion, as a result of which in the end no more dharma and adharma will be produced and liberation from rebirth will be obtained.[6] Dharma and adharma obviously play some kind of intermediary role in all this. Dharma in particular can help a person some way in the direction of final

liberation, but not all the way, for all the remaining dharma has to be consumed before liberation can take place. That is to say: the soul quality called dharma is an important causal factor with respect to liberation,[7] but it would not be justified to say that dharma, or knowledge of dharma, brings it about. Yet this is what the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* appears to say, as we will see below. For the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha*, as we have seen, the cause of the highest good, i.e. of liberation, is knowledge of the Vaiśeṣika categories. It is true that this knowledge has to follow a number of preparatory conditions, which are described in some detail in the text; this does not change the fact that the clinching element is knowledge.

There is one passage in the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* which appears to use the word *dharma* in a way that differs from its classical usage. This passage reads:[8]

(1) *dravyaguṇakarmasāmānyaviśeṣasamavāyānāṃ ṣaṇṇāṃ padārthānāṃ sādharmyavaidharmyābhyāṃ tattvajñānaṃ niḥśreyasahetuḥ / tac ceśvaracodanābhivyaktād dharmād eva /* (WI p. 1 Section 2)
Knowledge of the essence of the six categories – viz. substance (*dravya*), quality (*guṇa*), activity (*karman*), universal (*sāmānya*), specificity (*viśeṣa*) and inherence (*samavāya*) – , by way of the similarity and dissimilarity [between them], is the cause of the highest good. That [knowledge comes about] as a result of dharma that is manifested through the injunctions of the Lord."

The last part of this passage is not free from difficulties. If we assume that here, too, *dharma* designates the quality of the soul described above, how then are we supposed to understand that liberating knowledge can only result from dharma which is manifested through the injunctions of the Lord? What could it mean that this specific quality of the soul is manifested through the injunctions of the Lord? Does God utter injunctions to the effect that dharma that is already present in a soul must manifest itself? The *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* contains no hint suggesting that any such manifestations of dharma ever take place. And the early commentators do not provide help either.

There is however an obvious answer to these questions, if only we are willing to look outside the Vaiśeṣika system. *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* 1.1.2 defines dharma as follows: *codanālakṣaṇo 'rtho dharmaḥ*. Frauwallner (1968: 17) translates this: "Der Dharmaḥ ist etwas Nützliches, dessen Kennzeichen die (vedischen) Weisungen sind." In

other words: dharma is *characterized* by *codanā* in the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra*, just as it is *manifested* by *codanā* in the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha.* This strongly suggests that Praśasta here uses the term *dharma* as it was used in Mīmāṃsā, and not as he uses it everywhere else in his *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha.* That is to say, *dharma* in this passage of the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* does not refer to the classical Vaiśeṣika idea of dharma, a quality of the soul, but to the Mīmāṃsā idea of dharma. It is true that Praśasta adds one word to mark his difference from the Mīmāṃsā position. He prefixes the word *īśvara* 'God' to *codanā*, thus indicating that he, unlike the Mīmāṃsakas, looks upon Vedic injunctions as coming from God. This by itself is not surprising, because Praśasta appears to have been one of the first, if not the first, to introduce the notion of a creator God into the Vaiśeṣika system.[9]

This different use of the term *dharma* in one single passage of the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* suggests that the new Vaiśeṣika understanding of dharma as a quality of the soul replaced an earlier one, within the Vaiśeṣika school itself, that was close to, or identical with, the Mīmāṃsā idea of dharma. The present passage would then preserve a trace of this earlier usage.

Various considerations confirm the view that the classical Vaiśeṣika understanding of dharma as a quality of the soul represents a change of doctrine within the school that had taken place at some time before Praśasta but after its earliest beginnings. Consider the following:

(a) The way in which the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* presents the qualities, and dharma in particular, allows us to conclude that much had changed between the time of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* (since the surviving text has undergone various modifications, the expression "time of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*" is imprecise) and that of Praśasta. The *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* initially cites *Vaiśeṣika-sūtra* 1.1.5, which enumerates seventeen qualities.[10] Dharma and adharma do not figure among these. The *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* then adds seven more qualities (which cover dharma and adharma, see below), which it claims are covered in the sūtra by the particle ca. It seems safe to conclude that the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* known to Praśasta did not yet include dharma among the qualities. The same is true of all its surviving versions.

(b) The *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* says that it enumerates seven additional qualities, but in fact it enumerates only six items: heaviness (*gurutva*), fluidity (*dravatva*), viscosity (*sneha*), *saṃskāra* (no single

translation is possible; see Kapani (1992–1993: I: 277) ff.), 'the unseen' (*adṛṣṭa*) and sound (*śabda*).[11] The solution to this riddle lies in the fact that the single item *adṛṣṭa* stands for the two qualities dharma and adharma, as is clear from other passages in the same book: the enumeration of qualities of the soul, for example, does include *dharma* and *adharma* rather than *adṛṣṭa*[12] and *dharma* and *adharma* are sometimes used to refer back to *adṛṣṭa*[13]. *Adṛṣṭa* is a term that occurs a number of times in the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, primarily in the fifth chapter, most often to explain physical processes: "adṛṣṭa moves objects in ordeals and magnetic processes; it causes extraordinary movements of earth and water, the circulation of water in trees, the upward flaming of fire, the horizontal blowing of wind or air, the initial movements of atoms and 'minds' (*manas*, in the process of forming new organisms)" (Halbfass, 1991: 311). Halbfass (1991: 312 f.) further points out that the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* nowhere states that adṛṣṭa and dharma / adharma are identical, nor that they are different. He draws attention to the fact that the *Nyāya Bhāṣya* of Vātsyāyana knows dharma and adharma as being inherent in the soul, but does not use the term *adṛṣṭa* as a synonym for these two. This term is here rather used with reference to a theory that is rejected and that maintains that there is adṛṣṭa in the material atoms (*aṇu*), as well as in the 'mind' (*manas*),[14] and that gives them the kinetic impulse needed for the formation of bodies and so on. Also the commentator Vyomaśiva on the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* is acquainted with, and rejects, the theory that adṛṣṭa resides in atoms and not in the soul. Halbfass (1991: 315) assumes that adṛṣṭa "may primarily have been a gapfiller in the causal explication of the universe".[15] We may conclude that the classical notions of dharma and adharma as qualities of the soul absorbed the notion of adṛṣṭa which was initially different from these two.

It is clear from the above that the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* as known to Praśasta, just like the versions known to us today, did not count dharma and adharma among the qualities. And yet dharma plays a central role in the first three sūtras of this text,[16] which read as follows (for an interpretation, see below):

(i) *athāto dharmaṃ vyākhyāsyāmaḥ*
(ii) *yato 'bhyudayaniḥśreyasasiddhiḥ sa dharmaḥ*
(iii) *tadvacanād āmnāyasya prāmāṇyam*[17]

Sūtra (i) announces that dharma will be explained, presumably in the remainder of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*; sūtra (ii) adds that on the basis of

dharma one reaches *abhyudaya* and *niḥśreyasa* (to be understood as residence in Brahmaloka and liberation respectively, according to the commentator Candrānanda); while sūtra (iii) appears to state that the Veda is authoritative because it teaches dharma.[18] The dharma taught by the Veda is not, of course, the quality of the soul accepted by later Vaiśeṣikas. It must be something very similar to the dharma which the Mīmāṃsakas believed was taught in the Veda. And indeed, if we assume that Praśasta's characterization of dharma as *īśvaracodanābhivyakta* 'manifested by the injunctions of the Lord' continues an earlier Vaiśeṣika tradition, we can conclude that early Vaiśeṣika shared in most essential respects its notion of dharma with ritual Mīmāṃsā.[19]

This does not necessarily entail that all occurrences of the word *dharma* in the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* have to be interpreted as in Mīmāṃsā. One should never forget that the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* is not the unitary composition of one single individual. Already before the time of Praśasta, this text had undergone numerous modifications. There is, for example, reason to think that sūtras had been added and that their original order had been changed.[20] It is not therefore impossible that the new meaning of *dharma* manifests itself already in some parts of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* as we know it. At some places (VS(C) 4.2.5: *dharmaviśeṣāt*; 6.2.18: *icchādveṣapūrvikā dharmādharmayoḥ pravṛttiḥ*) one has indeed the impression that *dharma*, already in the surviving *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, is used in its classical sense, referring to a quality of the soul. This merely suggests that the new meaning of *dharma*, its understanding as a quality of the soul, had been introduced into Vaiśeṣika already before Praśasta. Unfortunately no evidence is known to me that would allow us to determine with more precision exactly when this change may have taken place.

How is the term *dharma* used in Mīmāṃsā? We have already seen that dharma is "characterized by injunctions (*codanā*)" (*Mīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.1.2). Beyond this, the *Mīmāṃsā Bhāṣya* of Śabara, the classical text for this school of Vedic interpretation, says remarkably little about it. Indeed, while introducing sūtra 1.1.2 Śabara states that experts have varying opinions as to what is dharma.[21] Sūtra 1.1.2 (*codanālakṣaṇo 'rtho dharmaḥ*; see above) is meant to resolve this issue. Dharma is what one gets to know through Vedic revelation, which consists in injunctions. What do we learn through these injunctions? Primarily what activities – sacrificial activities – lead to heaven. The intermediary between a sacrifice and heaven (which is

reached long after the termination of the sacrifice) is represented by the mysterious apūrva, which guarantees the connection between the two. Dharma, apūrva and codanā are closely connected, and in one passage Śabara states in so many words that one speaks about codanā to indicate apūrva.[22] Elsewhere he identifies dharma with 'the Agnihotra etc.', i.e., with ritual activity.[23] A passage in Jayanta Bhaṭṭa's *Nyāyamañjarī* observes that the old Mīmāṃsakas identify dharma with apūrva which is without substratum (*nirādhāra*) and is produced by ritual activity, whereas the followers of Śabara identify it with ritual activity itself.[24] Yoshimizu (2000: 163 n. 27) – drawing attention to a passage in the Śābara Bhāṣya on sūtra 2.1.1 where dharma and apūrva are identified – points out that Śabara, measured by Jayanta's criteria, is an 'old Mīmāṃsaka" rather than a "follower of Śabara". An analysis of Śabara's observations, on the other hand, seems to suggest that he may think of apūrva as having a special connection with or even as inhering in the human soul.[25]

Halbfass (1991: 302, 334 n. 46), who draws attention to the abovementioned passage of the *Nyāyamañjarī*, also refers to some passages in other works where *apūrva* is supposedly a synonym of *dharma*. Not all these passages do however provide evidence for the presumed identification of dharma and apūrva in early Mīmāṃsā. Neither of the two passages from Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* which he refers to makes this identification. The first one (Vkp 3.7.34) does use the word *apūrva*, but does not mention *dharma*; the second (Vkp 3.8.37) uses neither of these two terms. The commentator Phullarāja on the first of these two verses[26] explains that, according to some, apūrva is identical with dharma / adharma and with adṛṣṭa.[27] The identification of dharma / adharma with adṛṣṭa suggests that Phullarāja does not here introduce us to "an old Mīmāṃsā theory of apūrva", but to the classical Vaiśeṣika doctrine of dharma / adharma, with as added peculiarity that now apūrva is said to be the same as the Vaiśeṣika qualities of the soul known by those names.

Uddyotakara's *Nyāya Vārttika* on *Nyāya-sūtra* 1.1.7, too, uses the term *apūrva* as a synonym of *dharma* and *adharma*.[28] As in the case of Phullarāja, this suggests that we are here confronted with a new interpretation of apūrva, which identifies it with the new Vaiśeṣika qualities of the soul called *dharma* and *adharma*. However, Uddyotakara is acquainted with a position which looks upon apūrva, and dharma and adharma, as being eternal. This eternal apūrva is supposedly manifested by people:[29] "Although apūrva is [one and] eternal, [only] the person who makes [it] manifest has [its] fruit. And

ritual act is [done] for the sake of manifestation. And because it is [done] for manifestation, ritual act is not left unperformed. [For] it is seen that whatever is manifested gives its fruit only to the one who manifests it." Kei Kataoka (2000) has recently argued that the notion of dharma as an eternal entity that is made manifest as a result of sacrificial activity was current among certain Mīmāṃsakas, and was at least sometimes identified with apūrva. Such a notion appears to be attributed to the Mīmāṃsakas by authors as diverse as Bharthari (commentary on the *Mahābhāṣya*),[30] the author of the *Vṛtti* on Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya*,[31] Siṃhasūri the commentator of Mallavādin's *Dvādaśāra-Nayacakra*[32] and of course Uddyotakara. Also the chapter on Mīmāṃsā in Bhavya's *Madhyamakahṛdaya* mentions apūrva and describes it as "to be manifested by [ritual] action".[33] His auto-commentary *Tarkajvālā*, moreover, identifies apūrva with dharma.[34] Kataoka concludes from all this evidence that the theory which he calls *dharma-abhivyakti-vāda* must go back to the latter half of the 6th century.

It seems, then, that early Mīmāṃsā had rather hazy ideas about the precise nature of dharma. Later on, at least in part under the influence of classical Vaiśeṣika, it tried in various ways to give a more precise meaning to this originally imprecise term.

We have seen that the ontological concerns of the Vaiśeṣika school of thought made them specify what exactly dharma is. In doing so, they ended up with a notion of dharma as a quality of the soul, a notion which, as a result of this transformation, had moved a long way from the Mīmāṃsā understanding of this term which they started from. Mīmāṃsakas after Śabara were not uninterested in the new qualities dharma and adharma. It appears, indeed, that Brahmanical thinkers of the time felt pressed to specify what kind of thing dharma really is. Where earlier thinkers of the Vaiśeṣika and Mīmāṃsā schools used the term *dharma* in a rather general sense – expressing something perhaps not too dissimilar to English 'virtue, merit, appropriateness' – later thinkers of these two schools felt obliged to specify its precise ontological status. In the case of Vaiśeṣika this is not surprising, for ontology has been a central concern of this school, perhaps from the beginning; the presence of an important element in its philosophy (*dharma* is mentioned in its first sūtra) whose ontological status was less than clear posed a challenge which the school had to come to grips with. Mīmāṃsā was perhaps under less pressure; yet it did not escape from the ontological concerns of its fellow philosophers.

By way of conclusion some few words can be said about the other classical schools of Brahmanical philosophy. Sāṃkhya – which here includes the so-called Yoga philosophy – underwent a strong influence of Vaiśeṣika in matters psychological, but its efforts to precisely define what kind of thing dharma was did not lead to noteworthy results. Dharma and adharma are explained as parts of buddhi, one of the evolutes of primary matter (*pradhāna*); the constraints of the system hardly allowed for another possibility. The Yuktidīpikā, for example, describes dharma as follows:[35] "The disposition which is part of [the constituent called] sattva, and which resides in the buddhi as a result of carrying out acts that have been prescribed in the Veda and in the sacred tradition, is called *dharma*." The so-called Vedānta philosophy presents itself as a better form of Mīmāṃsā, but one which, unlike ritual Mīmāṃsā, does not study dharma but Brahma. *Brahma-sūtra* 1.1.1 reads *athāto brahmajijñāsā*, which is an adaptation of *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* 1.1.1 *athāto dharmajijñāsā*. The Śārīraka Mīmāṃsā – later also called Uttara-Mīmāṃsā – builds in an essential way on ritual Mīmāṃsā, to which it has left the study of dharma; it can now concentrate on Brahma. Dharma does not therefore play as crucial a role in it.

APPENDIX

The following passage occurs, as we have seen, in the Padārthadharmasaṅgraha:

(1) *dravyaguṇakarmasāmānyaviśeṣasamavāyānāṃ ṣaṇṇāṃ padārthānāṃ sādharmyavaidharmyābhyāṃ tattvajñānaṃ niḥśreyasahetuḥ / tac ceśvaracodanābhivyaktād dharmād eva /* (WI p. 1 Section 2)

It is not possible to seriously discuss this passage without taking into consideration passage (2), which is a sūtra in one of the surviving versions of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*:

(2) *dharmaviśeṣaprasūtād dravyaguṇakarmasāmānyaviśeṣasamavāyānāṃ padārthānāṃ sādharmyavaidharmyābhyāṃ tattvajñānān niḥśreyasam* (VS(Ś) 1.1.4)

This is sūtra 1.1.4 in the version of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* commented upon by Śaṅkara Miśra. It does not occur in the other surviving versions of this text.[36] We will refer to it as "the fourth sūtra".

The similarity between (1) and (2) is undeniable, and we have to accept that the two did not come into existence independently of each other. The question is: Which one influenced, and therefore preceded, the other?

Erich Frauwallner (1984: 39) argued that 'the fourth sūtra' (2) was composed under the influence of *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* passage (1). He further argued that 'the fourth sūtra' (2) is indispensible after the three sūtras that precede it, and must therefore be accepted as belonging in their company, in spite of the fact that it has only been preserved in the version commented upon by Śaṅkara Miśra. These four initial sūtras, Frauwallner argued, must have been composed after the original character of Vaiśeṣika had been modified around the time of Praśasta. The original beginning of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* was different, and Frauwallner makes an attempt to reconstruct it.

Frauwallner's arguments that original Vaiśeṣika was not interested in concepts like liberation and that such ideas, along with the idea of a creator God, did not enter the system until around the time of Praśasta, have found little favour among more recent scholars. Halbfass (1986, 1992: 69 f.) has described Frauwallner's thesis about the "original beginning" of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* as "challenging, but not convincing". Houben (1994) criticizes Frauwallner's position according to which originally Vaiśeṣika was a pure philosophy of nature without interest in liberation. This implies that the beginning of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra* may have been as it is today, already before the time of Praśasta.

This raises the question whether 'the fourth sūtra' may be older than Praśasta. This question is to be distinguished from the other one as to whether "the fourth sūtra" is inseparable from the three initial sūtras of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*. If it is inseparable from those three, the 'fourth sūtra' must be as old as the other ones, and therefore older than Praśasta. But it may conceivably be older than Praśasta without being inseparable from the three initial sūtras. It may conceivably have existed as part of a commentary, or as a sūtra that was added long after the first three but still before Praśasta. The question as to how old the 'fourth sūtra' is must therefore be considered on its own, independently of speculations about its connection with other sūtras.

Isaacson (1995a: 234) is of the opinion that "... there is no good reason to regard the sūtra as old". In another publication (1995b: 757 n. 22) he criticizes Frauwallner: "Frauwallner's keen philological instinct may perhaps have erred ... It is precisely the absence of the expected enumeration of categories which is likely to be original here.

Indeed an enumeration of six categories would be suspect, for I think it very likely that in the *earliest* period of composition of sūtras the classical list of padārthas had not yet been settled on." This last argument may be valid, and would show that the "fourth sūtra" cannot have belonged to the earliest period of composition of sūtras. This does not however help us all that much, for passages that existed before Praśasta do not for that reason necessarily belong to the earliest period of Vaiśeṣika. There is indeed some reason to think that Praśasta, if he knew passage (2) at all, did not recognize it as a sūtra, this because Praśasta normally clearly indicates that he considers something a sūtra.[37] He might then have cited it to justify (1). This does not exclude the possibility that (2) had once been a sūtra that, because of its length, came to be looked upon as part of a commentary.[38] We here find ourselves in the midst of speculations from among which the available evidence does not allow us to make a sensible choice.

Let us look somewhat more closely at passages (1) and (2). Both agree that knowledge of the essence of the Vaiśeṣika categories is the cause of the highest good. Both agree that this knowledge results from dharma. According to the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* this dharma is "manifested by the injunctions of the Lord" (Jha, 1915/1982: 16). The "fourth sūtra" (2) merely states that this dharma is special (*dharmaviśeṣa*).

An important difference between the two passages is that the former recognizes a creator God where the latter does not. It is known that the notion of a creator God entered Vaiśeṣika rather late (Bronkhorst, 1996). However, if one accepts the obvious, viz., that passages (1) and (2) are not independent of each other, it will be difficult to conclude from this that the 'fourth sūtra' (2) was composed under the influence of passage (1). As far as our knowledge of the development of Vaiśeṣika goes, the idea of a creator God was accepted by all subsequent texts of the school, certainly by all those that based themselves on the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha*. It is hard to believe that the author of the 'fourth sūtra' – assuming that he composed this sūtra under the influence of the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* – could leave out God and simply speak of a special dharma (*dharmaviśeṣa*). Influence in the opposite direction – the passage in the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* was composed under the influence of the 'fourth sūtra' (2) – avoids this difficulty.

This position is confronted with one difficulty. We had occasion to observe that the word *dharma* in passage (1) is closer to Mīmāṃsā

and early Vaiśeṣika usage than to the classical Vaiśeṣika use of this term. The "fourth sūtra" (2), on the other hand, would seem to use the term in a way which agrees with classical Vaiśeṣika . The compound dharmaviśeṣa occurs several times in the *Padārthadharma-saṅgraha*,[39] but does not appear to be used in Mīmāṃsā.[40] Is this proof that the 'fourth sūtra' must be more recent than passage (1)?

It is not. We saw that passage (1) uses the word *dharma* archaically and is therefore something of an anachronism in the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha*. We concluded from it that the classical meaning of *dharma* may have been introduced into Vaiśeṣika before Praśasta. The classical use of *dharma* in the 'fourth sūtra' does not therefore prove anything regarding its age.

If, then, we are forced to choose between these two possibilities: either the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha* passage (1) influenced the "fourth sūtra" (2), or vice-versa, we may have to consider the second possibility as the more likely. The 'fourth sūtra' may be older than the *Padārthadharmasaṅgraha*, and Praśasta may have known it, even if not as a sūtra. It is true that we may not be forced to make such a choice. The similarity between these two passages might be due to the fact that both were influenced by an earlier common source. Either way, it seems unlikely that the "fourth sūtra" was composed under the influence of passage (1).

NOTES

1 The section on Buddhist dharmas heavily draws upon Bronkhorst (2000a).

2 Cp. Gethin's understanding of dharma as "an instance of one of the fundamental physical or mental events that interact to produce the world as we experience it" (Wijeratne & Gethin, 2002: xix).

3 See Frauwallner (1963/1995).

4 The passage (WI p. 1 Section 2) is cited below.

5 WI p. 16 Section 80: tasya (=*ātmanaḥ*) *guṇāḥ buddhisukhaduḥkhecchādveṣaprayatnadharmādharmasaṃskārasaṃkhyāparimāṇapṛthaktvasaṃyogavibhāgāḥ*. The remaining qualities of this list can also occur in other substances.

6 Bronkhorst (2000b: Section 4, Section 6)

7 Cp. WI p. 63 Section 308: *kartuḥ priyahitamokṣahetuḥ [dharmaḥ]*.

8 Some editions omit *ṣaṇṇāṃ* others read *sādharmyavaidharmyatattvajñānaṃ*; some again have °*nodanā*° for °*codanā*°.

9 Bronkhorst (1996).

10 WI p. 1 Section 5: *guṇāś ca rūparasagandhasparśasaṃkhyāparimāṇapṛthaktvasaṃyogavibhāgaparatvāparatvabuddhisukhaduḥkhecchādveṣaprayatnāś ceti kaṇṭhoktāḥ saptadaśa*. (Some editions omit the first ca, one omits °saṃkhyā°, another one iti.) Compare this with VS(C) 1.1.5: *rūparasagandhasparśāḥ saṅkhyāḥ parimāṇāni pṛthaktvaṃ saṃyogavibhāgau paratvāparatve buddhayaḥ sukhaduḥkhe icchādveṣau prayatnaś ca guṇāḥ*.

[11] WI p. 1–2 Section 5: *caśabdasamuccitāś ca gurutvadravatvasnehasaṃskārādṛṣṭaś-abdāḥ saptaivety caturviṃśatir guṇāḥ*. (Variants: one edition reads *tu* for *ca*, one omits *saptaiva* and reads *eva* for *evaṃ*, some read *caturviṃśatiguṇāḥ*.)
[12] See note 3, above.
[13] E.g. WI p. 43 Section 228: ... *adṛṣṭāc ca*; Section 231: ... *tat sarvaṃ saṃskāradharmābhyāṃ bhavati* / ... *tat sarvam adharmasaṃskārābhyāṃ bhavati* /
[14] The *Mīmāṃsākoṣa* (IV p. 2241) cites a passage from Prabhākara's *Bṛhatī* according to which some consider dharma a quality of the buddhi, others a quality of the self (p. 26: *dharmaṃ kecit buddhiguṇaṃ manyante kecit ātmaguṇam*). On p. 2249 it cites a line from Pārthasārathi Miśra's *Śāstradīpikā* according to which dharma and adharma are fluctuations (*?vṛtti*) of the internal organ (1.1.5.5, p. 114 l. 3: *dharmādharmayoḥ antaḥkaraṇavṛttitvāt*).
[15] For at least some Buddhist thinkers *acintya* appears to have played a similar role; see Kritzer (2002).
[16] VS 1.1.1–3. These sūtras figure in all surviving versions of the *Vaiśeṣika Sūtra*, i.e., the ones commented upon by Candrānanda, Bhaṭṭa Vādīndra and Śaṅkara Miśra respectively, as well as the two further recensions discovered and edited by Isaacson (1995a: 216, 270). About the question whether originally a fourth sūtra, now only preserved in the version commented upon by Śaṅkara Miśra, concluded this set, see the appendix.
[17] VS(C) 1.1.3 has *āmnāyaprāmāṇyam.*
[18] The expression *tadvacanāt* has been interpreted to mean:
(i) because Hiraṇyagarbha has uttered it (Candrānanda)
(ii) because it teaches *svarga* and *apavarga* (Bhaṭṭa Vādīndra)
(iii) because God has uttered it (Bhaṭṭa Vādīndra, Śaṅkara Miśra)
(iv) because it teaches *dharma* (Bhaṭṭa Vādīndra, Śaṅkara Miśra)
(v) because it teaches the self (Bhaṭṭa Vādīndra)
There can hardly be any doubt that (iv) is by far the most natural understanding of this expression in its context. It leads to the following interpretation of the sūtra: "The Veda is authoritative because it teaches dharma."
[19] Thakur (1961: 3) suggests that *dharma* at the beginning of the *Vaiśeṣika Sutra* means *padārthadharma*, "'property' or 'attribute' of the different categories" (Houben, 1994: 732 n. 27). This seems unlikely.
[20] See Bronkhorst (1993a, 1994).
[21] Frauwallner (1968: 16): *dharmaṃ prati hi vipratipannā bahuvidaḥ / kecid anyaṃ dharmam āhuḥ, kecid anyam /*
[22] Śabara's *Bhāṣya* on *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* 2.1.5 (Ānandāśrama edition p. 358): *codanety apūrvaṃ brūmaḥ.* Cited in Biardeau (1964: 92 n. 1). See further Yoshimizu (2000: 161 n. 16), on the interpretation of this sentence.
[23] Śabara on *Mīmāṃsā-sūtra* 1.1.5; Frauwallner (1968: 24): *autpattikaḥ śabdasyārthena saṃbandhas tasya* ***agnihotrādilakṣaṇasya dharmasya*** *nimittaṃ pratyakṣādibhir anavagatasya.*
[24] Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, *Nyāyamañjarī* (ed. Śukla I p. 255 l. 3–4; ed. Varadacharya I p. 664 l. 6–7): *vṛddhamīmāṃsakāḥ yāgādikarmanirvartyam apūrvaṃ nāma dharmam abhivadanti, yāgādikarmaiva śābarā bruvate.* Further p. 255 l. 8–9 / p. 664 l. 15–16: *svargayāgāntarālavartinaś ca sthirasya* ***nirādhāras****yāpūrvasya niḥpramāṇakatvāt jarajjaiminīyapravādo 'py apeśalaḥ*. The first of these two positions finds expression in Mādhava's *Jaiminīyanyāyamālāvistara* (2.1.1: *apūrvasyaiva dharmatvāt*). Cp. Yoshimizu, 2000: 163 n. 27.
[25] Bronkhorst (2000b: Section 13). I am not sure that the passage from Śabara's *Bhāṣya* (on sūtra 7.1.7) referred to by Yoshimizu (2000: 151) is in contradiction with this idea.

[26]Helārāja's commentary on this and the following stanzas is not available, as indicated by the editor Subramania Iyer (1963: 261 n. 31).
[27]Subramania Iyer (1963: 261 l. 12) (on Vkp 3.7.34): *apūrvaṃ dharmādharmākhyam adṛṣṭasaṃjñakaṃ kecid evaṃrūpaṃ taṃ sāmarthyalakṣaṇaṃ bhāvam āhuḥ.*
[28]NV on 1.1.7, p. 175 l. 2–3: *asiddham apūrvasyānityatvam / na prāyaṇānupapatteḥ / yadi dharmādharmau nityau bhavataḥ kasya prakṣayāt prāyaṇam iti /* etc.
[29]NV on 1.1 7, p. 175 l. 9–10: *nityam apy apūrvaṃ yo 'bhivyanakti tasya phalam, abhivyaktyarthā kriyeti, ato na kriyālopa iti / yena yad abhivyajyate tasyaiva tat phaladātṛ bhavatīti dṛṣṭam /*. Tr. Kataoka (2000: 170).
[30]Bronkhorst, 1987: 25 l. 24–27: *dharmaprayojano vā iti mīmāṃsakadarśanam / avasthita eva dharmaḥ / sa tv agnihotrādibhir abhivyajyate / tatpreritas tu phalado bhavati / yathā svāmī bhṛtyaiḥ sevāyāṃ preryate phalaṃ praty evam ayaṃ niyamo dharmasya phalanirvṛttiṃ prati prayojaka iti /*. Cf. Bronkhorst, 1989: 112 [383] ff.; Kataoka, 2000: 168.
[31]Iyer, 1966: 224 l. 5–6 (on verse 1.136 = Vkp 1.172): *tatra kecid ācāryā manyante: ... / śāstrānuṣṭhānāt tu kevalād dharmābhivyaktiḥ / ...* Kataoka (2000: 167–168).
[32]DNC I p. 140 l. 25: *... parasparaviśiṣṭābhir yajñasaṃsthābhir agniṣṭomādibhir iṣṭibhiś cābhivyaktavyā apūrvā api ...*; as emended in Kataoka (2000: 174). DNC I p. 141 l. 8: *... dharmaḥ kriyābhivyaṅgya[ḥ] ...* Kataoka (2000: 176).
[33]Bhavya, *Madhyamakahṛdaya* 9.10: *apūrvo 'pi kriyāvyaṅgyaḥ kriyā mokṣe 'pi sādhanam / somapānādikā vidvān nirjayed antakaṃ yayā //* "Moreover, apūrva is to be manifested by [ritual] action, and ritual action such as drinking soma etc. are the means to [attain] liberation (*mokṣa*). By means of such [ritual action] a knowing person may overcome death." Cp. Kawasaki (1977: 10–11); Lindtner (1997: 96–97, 1999: 254–255, 2001: 93).
[34]See Kawasaki (1977: 10 n. 9).
[35]YD p. 191 l. 33–35: *tatra śrutismṛtivihitānāṃ karmaṇāṁ anuṣṭhānād buddhyavasthaḥ sattvāvayava āśayabhūto dharma ity ucyate.* Cp. Bronkhorst (2000b: 56).
[36]The Trivandrum manuscript edited by Isaacson (1995a: 270, 1995b: 757) has *sādhanāny asya dravyaguṇakarmāṇi.*
[37]Bronkhorst (1993a: 83 f).
[38]Cp. Bronkhorst (1993b: 164 f).
[39]WI p. 131, s.v. *dharma-viśeṣāt, dharma-viśeṣa-sahitebhyaḥ.*
[40] Cp. *Mīmāṃsākoṣa* IV pp. 2241 s.v. *dharma* etc.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DNC Dvādaśāra Nayacakra of Mallavādin. Edited, with the commentary Nyāyāgamānusārṇi of Siṃhasūri Gaṇi Vādi Kṣamāśramaṇa, by Muni Jambūvijayajī, 3 parts, Bhavnagar: Sri Jain Ātmanand Sabha, 1966, 1976, 1988.

GOS Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda

NV Nyāya Vārttika de Uddyotakara, in the following edition: Nyāyadarśanam with Vātsyāyana's Bhāṣya, Uddyotakara's Vārttika, Vācaspati Miśra's Tātparyaṭīkā & Viśvanātha's Vṛtti. Chapter I, section I critically edited with notes by Taranatha Nyaya-Tarkatirtha and chapters I-ii – V by Amarendramohan Tarkatirtha, with an introduction by Narendra Chandra Vedantatirtha. Calcutta: Metropolitan Printing & Publishing House, 1936.

ÖAW Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien

Vkp Bhartṛhari, Vākyapadīya, ed. W. Rau, Wiesbaden 1977

VS Vaiśeṣika Sūtra

VS(C) Vaiśeṣikasūtra of Kaṇāda, with the Commentary of Candrānanda, critically edited by Muni Śrī Jambuvijayaji, second edition, Baroda: Oriental Research Institute, 1982 (GOS 136)

VS(Ś) Vaiśeṣika Sūtra in the version commented upon by Śaṅkara Miśra; for an edition see Sinha, 1911/1986.

WI Word Index to the Praśastapādabhāṣya: A complete word index to the printed editions of the Praśastapādabhāṣya, by Johannes Bronkhorst & Yves Ramseier, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1994

YD Yuktidpīkā, ed. in Albrecht Wezler and Shujun Motegi, Yuktidpīkā: The most significant commentary on the Sāṃkhyakārikā, Vol. I, Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1998 (Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien, 44)

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